AYAT-I-QUDSI

THE NAWAB GAUHAR BEGUM

ALIAS

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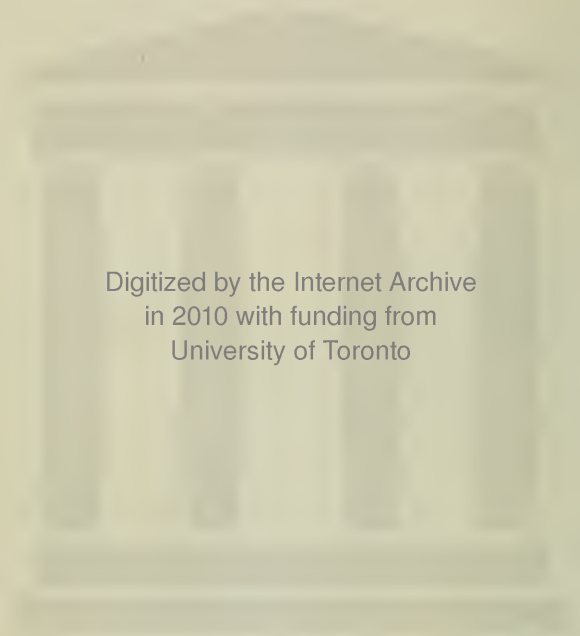
OF

BHOPAL

BY

IGHNESS NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.I

RULER OF BHOPAL

SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM,
THE PRESENT RULER OF BHOPAL
AND AUTHOR

[Front.

HAYAT-I-QUDSI

LIFE OF THE NAWAB GAUHAR BEGUM

ALIAS

THE NAWAB BEGUM QUDSIA,

OF

BHOPAL

BY

HER HIGHNESS NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM

G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.I.

RULER OF BHOPAL

TRANSLATED BY W. S. DAVIS,

Political Agent in Bhopal.

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INTRODUCTION

Her Highness the Nawab Qudsia Begum, whose life and character I have attempted to portray in this volume, was one of the most God-fearing, pious and virtuous ladies of her time. The interesting accounts of her virtues, charities, kindness to her subjects, benevolence to the poor, piety and sanctity, can hardly be rivalled in the life of the great saints.

As stories of her gracious character and pious life are remembered with reverence throughout the Bhopal State, it is only fitting that her biography should be recorded, and it seems to be a sacred duty for me to do this, not only because she was my ancestor, but because she was the first ruler of the new dynasty to which I belong.

A considerable portion of the contents of this book is from the vivid recollection which I have of my great grandmother. It would no doubt have been more suitable if the life of the Begum Qudsia had appeared before the publication of Hyat-i-Shahjahani (the life of my mother), but owing to the disappearance of many valuable manuscripts, the difficulty in tracing many which exist, and the time taken in checking and sifting oral accounts, I deemed it better not to delay the publication of the life of my mother.

FOREWORD

The life of her great grandmother given in this volume by Her Highness, the present Begum of Bhopal, takes the reader back to a most stirring and stormy period of Indian history.

Qudsia Begum's childhood followed closely on the last irruption into India of the Afghans from the North and the march of the Maharatta armies from the Deccan into Upper India. Her youth witnessed the advance of the power of the East India Company, the defeat of the Maharattas and the stamping out of the predatory bands of Pindaras.

The pacification of India followed in the early years of the 19th Century, and the distinguished Political Officer who negotiated most of the treaties and arrangements, which gave a new lease of life to the smaller States of Central India, was Sir John Malcolm, the historian and fascinating writer.

Her Highness has quoted his writings several times, and there is not a state in Central India which is not indebted to his wise and sympathetic policy under which they have remained up to the present day separate States, devoted to the King Emperor and British Empire.

Bhopal was one of the first States to perceive

that the Maharatta confederacy would collapse before the British, and from 1811 onwards had endeavoured to obtain treaties with the East India Company guaranteeing its safety.

Being a Mahommedan State, surrounded on all sides by the powerful Maharatta States of Indore and Gwalior and by small Rajpoot or Maharatta States that were in their grasp, Bhopal had always had the greatest difficulty to preserve its existence.

On several occasions, notably in 1812-13, when the City of Bhopal withstood a siege of four months by the armies of Scindia and Nagpur Raja, and was reduced to the greatest straits, it looked as if the end had come. So few of its defenders remained that the women of Bhopal took charge of and successfully defended one of the gates.

Shortly afterwards, a strong Maharatta army, under Jean Baptiste Filoze, one of Scindia's generals, had got as far as Sehore, twenty-three miles from Bhopal, and would undoubtedly have captured the place, as it was much reduced at the time, but fortunately for Bhopal and its gallant defenders the pressure of Scindia in the north became so acute that it led to the withdrawal of Filoze's army. A story is told that when Filoze found that he would not have to attack Bhopal, he threw himself into the arms of the Bhopal general, who was a Bourbon, and said: "We are both sons of France, why should

we fight ? " Filoze's geography was at fault, no doubt, his father having been a Neapolitan ; but he had been born and brought up among Scindia's French battalions, and probably his sympathies were French.

One of the British generals used to refer to him as " that confounded fellow, John the Baptist."

During the 18th and first few years of the 19th Century India was the home of many European soldiers of fortune. The different States all over the country kept up large armies, and were constantly at war and were always ready to employ these reckless European adventurers to train and lead their forces.

Many of these men, especially the Frenchmen, had most remarkable careers, and among other things showed the East India Company what excellent bodies of troops could be formed from the fighting castes of India. Many of the adventurers were killed, a few returned to their homes with fortunes, one or two, such as George Thomas, who had begun life as a steward on an East Indiaman, actually conquered and held small States, and the remainder settled in India when the times grew quieter, and in most cases married Indian wives, and their descendants are still to be found in the country.

The Bourbon family in Bhopal, with its romantic and interesting history, touched on in this book is an instance.

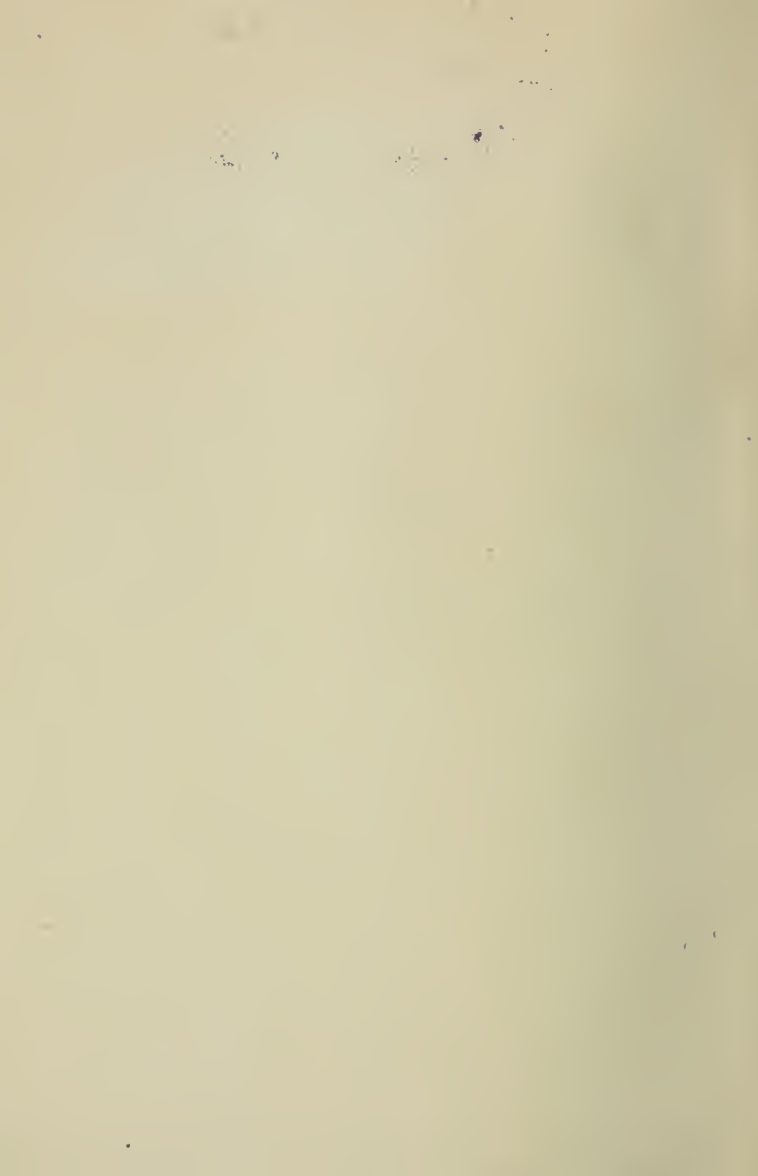
The first clause of the treaty with Bhopal runs as follows :—

There shall be perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interests between the Honourable East India Company and the Nawab of Bhopal, his heirs and successors ; and the friends and enemies of one party shall be the friends and enemies of both.

These words were written just a hundred years ago, and have been faithfully adhered to even through the stormy days of the Mutiny, and Bhopal under its Nawabs and four successive Begums has the proud boast that it has never drawn its sword against the British, and please God it never will.

(Signed) W. S. Davis,
(Political Agent in Bhopal).

PART I.

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MOST COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL.

HAYAT-I-QUDSI

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Qudsia Begum's birth, education, marriage-children and widowhood.

Nawab Qudsia Begum was born on the 9th of Rajab, 1216, A.H. (corresponding to 1799 A.D.). She was a daughter of Nawab Ghaus Mahommed Khan who was fifth ruler of Bhopal.

The Nawab had two wives, named Amir Begum and Chandni Begum. The former bore him one son, Hatim Mahommed Khan, and the latter who was the daughter of an Afghan merchant had two sons and one daughter, named as follows, Moiz Mahommed Khan, Miyan Faujdar Mahommed Khan and Gauhar Begum, the last being also known as Qudsia Begum and *Mihar-i-

*"Mihr-Tamsal" was a (*Tarikhi-Nam*) of Nawab Qudsia Begum, and not a name in the ordinary sense. It is a chronogram, and in Persian history and literature, dates of important events are often signified in this manner. Every letter of the alphabet has (according to the *Abjad*) a certain numerical value, and the value of the letters of "Mihr-Tamsal," added together, gives the date of Nawab Qudsia Begam's birth. Kaikhusrau Jahan is my Tarikhi-nam, and its letters give the date of my birth.

Tamsel. The Nawab was also credited with some 56 other children.

As far as can be ascertained the education of Qudsia Begum was mostly of a religious character. During her youth Bhopal was fighting single handed against Bhonsla, the Nagpur Raja and Gwalior, and she must have heard many accounts of the bravery in war of the last four rulers and have been anxious to follow the example of Mamola Bi, alias Maji Saheba, mother of Nawab Faiz Mahommed Khan, who for some years controlled the State and was de facto ruler.

At the age of fifteen she was married to Nawab Nazir-ud-Daulah Nazar Mahommed Khan on Friday the 22nd of Rabi-ul-Ekhir, 1232 A.H. This marriage had been arranged by Nawab Wazir Mahommed Khan to weld the two branches of the family and to end the friction which had existed between them. He however died before the completion of the ceremonies.

Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan was the youngest son of Nawab Wazir Mahommed Khan, who was great grandson of Sirdar Dost Mahommed Khan, the founder of Bhopal. Both father and son were celebrated for their bravery and force of character and were noted Generals and Commanders. Wazir Mahommed Khan is spec-

Nawab Ghaus Mahommed Khan,
Father of Qudsia Begum

[*Face page* 12

ially remembered for his heroic courage and daring during the battles of Nawabs Hyat Mahommed and Ghaus Mahommed's reigns.

Having realised the increasing power of the Honourable East India Company he attempted, but without success, to make an alliance with them. His next act was to refuse to fight against their forces, commanded by Sir Barry Close, who at that time, in conjunction with the Nagpur Raja, was attacking Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk, and the reason given was that his ancestor had assisted Colonel Goddard during his memorable march across India in 1778 A.D., and that since that time there had been friendship between the Company and Bhopal.

Before his death Wazir Mahommed Khan was on friendly terms both with Lord Minto, the Governor General, Mr. Metcalfe Resident at Delhi, Mr. Jenkins, Resident at Nagpur, and several of the British Military Commanders, and history shows that Bhopal is the only State in India which has never been at enmity with the British.

During the reign of Nawab Hayat Mahommed Khan, who preceded Ghaus Mahommed Khan, Bhopal had been fighting for its existence as a State, and its fortunes had fallen to a low ebb. Wazir Mahommed Khan, the only person strong enough to restore its fortunes, was in exile owing

to the enmity of Chotey Khan, the Diwan, and it was his return to Bhopal after Chotey Khan's death and patriotic and energetic action during Nawab Ghaus Mahommed's reign which saved Bhopal from being absorbed by the Mahrattas. Ghaus Mahommed was indolent and incompetent, and the whole power remained in the hands of Wazir Mahommed Khan who eventually succeeded him as Nawab when he retired and lived on his Jagir.

Sir John Malcolm in his "Memoir of Central India" writes as follows of Wazir Mahommed Khan.

"Vazier Mahommed died in February 1816, A.D., aged fifty-one, after having governed Bhopal little more than nine years; but of this short period he had not passed one day in repose. This principality, from the hour he assumed the Government until that of his death, was threatened with destruction. Such a man could alone have saved it. Though as remarkable for prowess and valour as the most desperate of the Afghan race, he was, in his manners, mild and pleasing; but his look and stature were alike commanding, and there was in his disposition a sternness that inspired awe. He latterly gave way to habits of dissipation, which were believed to have shortened his existence. All acquainted

with the vicissitudes of his life, deeply regretted his death at the moment it occurred. He should have lived to behold his patriotic efforts rewarded; to see the people of the land he loved rescued from destruction, and raised to happiness and prosperity by the Government which he had through life courted, and on which his hopes till the last hour of his life rested. This destiny was reserved for a son whom he selected and educated as his successor, and who proved himself every way worthy of his father."

After Wazir Mahommed's death the choice of a ruler for the State lay between Ghaus Mahommed Khan the ex-Nawab and the two sons of Wazir, Amir Mahommed Khan and Nazar Mahommed Khan. The first had proved his unfitness for the position and Amir Mahommed Khan was also considered incompetent, so the leading Nobles exercising their right of selection of the Chief unanimously chose Nazar Mahommed Khan his younger brother, and he was placed on the Gadi and invested with full powers before his marriage with Qudsia Begum.

Nazar Mahommed Khan and Qudsia Begum had only one child, a daughter, who was born in the upper storey of the Gauhar Mahal (Palace) in Bhopal on the 28th of Shauwal 1213 A.H., and named Sikandar Begum.

Qudsia Begum's married life was destined to last only two years and nine months and ended in a tragedy when her daughter was but one year and three months old.

There are two versions of Nazar Mahommed's lamentable death. One is that the Nawab when passing over a bridge over the Patra river adjoining the Fort of Islamnagar where he lived, noticed that the channel was choked with mud and set to work to have it cleared; being exhausted he layed down to sleep and in doing so his head struck a loaded pistol which exploded and the bullet passed through his head, killing him instantly.

The other version which is more widely credited is that the Nawab was playing with his little daughter Sikandar in a mosque of his palace where his brother-in-law Faujdar Mahommed Khan, a child of eight years, discharged a pistol, probably accidentally, with the result that the bullet passed through Nazar Mahommed's head and embedded itself in the wall of the mosque. Whichever version is true the catastrophe left Qudsia Begum a widow at the age of eighteen and a half years and Nazar Mahommed Khan had only reigned three years and nine months.

Nazar Mahommed Khan left the following will—" The well wishers and dignitaries of the

State should carry out their duties in the same excellent manner as they have performed them during my administration. They should look upon my wife Nawab Qudsia Begum as their ruler and obey her orders, and when my daughter Sikandar Begum attains to years of discretion she should be married to one of my relatives of equal position.

Her husband shall be called the Nawab of Bhopal."

Sir John Malcolm in his memoir already quoted writes as follows of Nazar Mahommed Khan, and his opinion may be taken as fully worthy of trust as he was Resident of Central India at the time, and besides being deeply interested in Bhopal affairs had special facilities for forming an opinion of Nazar Mahommed's character. "Nuzzer Mahommed Khan has been already mentioned as fighting and bleeding, while yet a youth, by his father's side, at the memorable siege of Bhopal. Hopeless of his eldest son, who was a slave to habits of indolence and excess, which enervated both his mind and body, Vizier Mahommed had early determined upon his successor, whose education was an object of his earnest solicitude; and, in addition to his other requirements, Nuzzer Mahommed had learnt so well the duties of a soldier that on his father's death he stood

the first in fame among the chiefs of the country. The respect for the memory of his father, combined with his own high qualities, made all the Nobles press the Government of Bhopal upon his acceptance.

Ghaus Mahommed, who, though sunk into obscurity, was still called Nabob, made no objection to his elevation ; and his eldest brother Amir Mahommed Khan, stupefied with his excesses, was among the first to avow publicly his own disqualifications, and to urge his younger brother to take upon himself the administration of the affairs of the State. To this Nuzzer Mahommed Khan consented ; and his first efforts were directed to the favourite object of his father's life, a treaty of peace with the English Government. The policy of this measure had been long under discussion, and a fear of the embarrasments in England led to the desire that no such treaty should be concluded, but the outrages committed by the Pindaries forced the Government to a course of measures which made obedience to such restrictive orders impossible.

The first step of the campaign of 1817 was the engagement with the State of Bhopal, concluded at Hussingabad, which guaranteed that territory to its actual ruler, and stipulated for his aiding the British army with a contingent, and co-

operating to the utmost of his means in the ensuing war. No obligation were ever more faithfully fulfilled. Nuzzer Mahommed received, as the reward of his zeal and efforts, the fine province named Punj Mahal, or the five districts which were taken from a Jagheerdar of the Paishwah, and which not only joined the territories of Bhopal, but had formerly been an integral portion of that principality. The restoration of the fort of Islamnuggur, subsequently obtained from Sindia, though of little value, was esteemed beyond all other favours by the ruling family of Bhopal. It contained the tomb of Yar Mahommed ; and its position, almost at the gates of the capital, had made its separation from the State a source of the greatest annoyance. The condition of this principality at Vizier Mahommed's death was so low, that its actual revenue could not have amounted to one lac of rupees. It was now, however, raised to a high rank among the secondary class of Native States. Its rescued territories included almost all the provinces its princes formerly possessed, and its revenues yielded from nine to ten lacs of rupees, with the expectation of soon exceeding thirty.

Never were prospects more flattering than those of Nuzzer Mahommed, when an unhappy accident

terminated his life, and left his family and country to mourn the untimely and irreparable loss of a prince who seemed born for the times in which he lived, and who promised to be as active and successful in restoring his country to prosperity as his father had been in saving it from destruction. His death was occasioned by the discharge of a pistol he carried about his person, which he laid down when playing in his inner apartments with his infant daughter; and it is supposed to have been fired by his brother-in-law, Faujdar Khan, a child of eight years of age, who was the only one present on this melancholy occasion. The sensation caused by his death was great, and men gave way for the moment to the worst suspicions. These, however were dispelled by the minute investigation which took place, and by the conduct of all to whom such a design could have been attributed, or who could have in any way expected benefit from it. But the general feelings and conduct of all persons, from Ghaus Mahommed to the lowest Patan, banished every suspicion of Nuzzer Mahommed Khan's death being premeditated. There was but one sentiment, that of deepest regret, and no person sought to take advantage of the accident to promote his own interests. At a consultation of the principal chiefs, it was

NAWAB NAZAR MAHOMMED KHAN

[*Face page 20*

resolved to continue to attend to the widow and ministers of the deceased prince, till the pleasure of the British Government was known as to his successor; and it is remarkable, that not the slightest effort was made by any party to influence the judgment of the British Government—a sufficient proof of itself, of the absence of all design or guilt on this unhappy occasion.

Nuzzer Mahommed Khan, when he died, was only twenty-eight years of age; he had governed Bhopal three years and five months, but he has left a name that has been attained by few during the longest life. Schooled in adversity, he early attained a remarkable maturity of judgment. His appearance was noble, and his manners those of a prince who knew the value of possessing the hearts of his subjects. His mind was so superior, and his courage so elevated him above suspicion, that the whole family of the rulers of Bhopal whom he had supplanted, as well as his elder brother who had resigned his birthright to him, lived not only without restriction, but on the most intimate footing of familiarity with him, coming and going through every apartment of his palace at their pleasure. Nuzzer Mahommed held in just detestation the general vices and indulgences of his tribe. His harem contained but one princess, and no slaves.

He was a good Mahommedan, but so far removed from bigotry, that his favourite companion and minister was a Christian. His whole soul was absorbed during the last two years in plans for improving his country. He investigated every account himself, heard every complaint; and, while all speak of his kindness, benevolence and justice, his memory is unstained by the reproach of a single act of tyranny.

A greater loss could not have occurred to a community in the condition of Bhopal than the death of Nuzzer Mahommed; and that event was also a serious misfortune to the British Government, to which the virtuous prince was firmly attached. He was exactly fitted to be the popular instrument which was required to restore order and prosperity. His mind went far beyond the usual range of those of his class. He cultivated knowledge of every description with extraordinary ardour, and had made no slight progress in the arts foreign to the occupations of his life and the habits of his station. The fame of Nuzzer Mahommed will be long commemorated as an object of emulation to his successors; but we must despair of seeing his equal. He was, as most other such characters have been, formed by the early scenes of his life: no instructions could have conveyed the lessons he had learnt.

When encouraged by the example and rewarded by the love of a noble father he struggled with him to preserve a country, rendered dearer from the extreme misery to which it was reduced ; and his mind was too well formed before the hour of success came, ever to lose that tone which it had received amid scenes of difficulty and danger.

Nuzzer Mahommed left no issue by his princess, the daughter of Ghaus Mahommed, except one female child. He had not assumed the title of Nabob, though he was always addressed as such by the British, for Ghaus Mahommed who had sunk into complete obscurity, was never in any way brought forward in the connection which was forced between that Government and the actual ruler of Bhopal. In the engagement which was entered into at Hussingabad, and the treaty made after the war, by which the cession to this State and the numbers of the contingent to be maintained were finally settled, Nuzzer Mahommed Khan and his decendants were alone mentioned, and to them the Government of the country was guaranteed. Mooner Mahommed Khan the son of Amir Mahommed Khan, the elder brother of Nuzzer Mahommed, has succeeded his uncle, to whose daughter he is to be married, that the interests of the family may as much as possible be united in his person."

Investigation into the circumstances of the death of Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan.

Sir John Malcolm in a foot note to his history (page 340) observes—"The same cause (his being the son of Ghaus Mahommed) which led to these suspicions, attached to his sister, the Nabob's only wife; but her ever having had such an intent is treated by Major Henley as quite impossible. She is described as very young, being only seventeen; she is, besides, stated to be of a mild disposition, and to have been strongly attached to the Nabob, who treated her with unusual consideration. He not only resisted all the entreaties that were used to induce him to contract a second marriage, but strictly prohibited the introduction of any young females, either as slaves, servant, or otherwise, within the Mahal. In further disproof of this it is stated, that her grief since the accident has been so great, as to produce her miscarriage—an event, that, had she cherished any ambitious views, she must have earnestly deprecated."

The untimely death of Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan coming as it did at a time when Bhopal was beset with troubles and difficulties from every quarter was a severe blow to his friends and supporters, and to the Qudsia Begum his loss was irreparable.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE REGENCY. THE BOURBONS OF BHOPAL. SIKANDAR BEGUM.

OWING to the Qudsia Begum's youth and to her being in Purdah, she at first took no part in the administration of the State, but her whole attention was given to her daughter who was the joy of her life. With the exception of four men she was surrounded by untrustworthy and self-seeking officials. These four were Hakim Shahzad Maseh, Raja Khushwakht Rai, Mian Karam Mahommed Khan and Bakshi Bahadur Mahommed Khan.

As these men took a very prominent part in Bhopal affairs some details of their history will be of interest.

Hakim Shahzad Maseh was descended from a Frenchman named Jean Philipe Bourbon, one of the interesting adventurers and believed to have been a member of the Royal Family of France who came to India in the reign of the Emperor Akbar. He served in Akbar's army, and his son became an officer of artillery. He

had much influence and had a position of honour at court. He married a Georgian slave girl, and had two sons. The eldest, Alexander Bourbon, rose to be superintendent of the Royal Seraglio in the reign of Jehangir and was granted Shergarh, a place in Malwa, in Jagir, as a reward for his services. This post remained in the hands of his descendants till the invasion of India by Nadir Shah, the last Governor of the Seraglio being Francis Bourbon. He and his family escaped to the fort of Shergarh and remained there till 1778 A.D., when they were attacked by the Raja of Narwar, and Francis and all except four were massacred. These four which included Salvador Bourbon, a son of Francis, took refuge with some christian families at Gwalior, and on the capture of that place by Colonel Popham, Salvador explained to what straits the family had been reduced and received an allowance from the State. Salvador also called Inayat Maseh came to Bhopal in A.D. 1785 with the family, and took service with Wazir Mahommed Khan and was appointed Killedar (Commander of the Fort) and subsequently after distinguished and faithful service to the State was granted a large jagir. His son Balthazar Bourbon, also called Shahzad Maseh, became one of Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan's chief Ministers and

was also granted a jagir. He rose to great distinction and died at the age of forty-two in 1892. Some descendants of the family are still living in Bhopal.

Raja Khushwakht Rai, a Kayasth by caste, served both the Begum Qudsia and Sikandar Begum loyally, and the latter appointed him Diwan of the State.

Mian Karam Mahommed Khan belonged to the Mirazi Khel section of the Orakzai tribe (to which the Bhopal family also belong) and was Kamdar to Qudsia Begum, who granted him a jagir worth Rs: 40000/- per annum.

Bakshi Bahadur Mahommed Khan was descended from Kale Mahommed Khan who was one of Sirdar Dost Mahommed Khan's original band, and came with him from Afghanistan. He was a gallant and loyal follower of Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan, and more will be heard of him in the following pages.

We have seen that Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan succeeded to the throne to the prejudice of his elder brother Amir Mahommed Khan, and as was to be expected the latter was not content to forego his rights without a struggle in which some of his relations lent him their support and active assistance.

Shortly after the death of Nazar Mahommed

Khan all members of the reigning family gathered at the palace and the question of the succession to the throne was discussed. Mahommed Din Khan, grandson of Karam Mahommed Khan, proposed that Asaf Mahommed Khan, his son-in-law, and a nephew of Nawab Wazir Mahommed Khan should be elected, but this was opposed by Karam Mahommed Khan and the meeting broke up without any definite decision having been arrived at.

Three days later when a large number of the army, members of the ruling family and prominent subjects of the State had assembled to celebrate the ceremony of the 'Fateha,' Karam Mahommed Khan addressed them and said: 'The will of God has been fulfilled, and it is incumbent on us to frame a scheme for the administration of the State.'

Hakim Shahzad Maseh whose loyal services both to Wazir Mahommed and Nazar Mahommed have been referred to was much affected by the death of Nazar Mahommed and stated: 'I have no desire to have anything whatever to do with State affairs, but I will be responsible for three things, first, the management of the garden of the deceased, second, the palace which was his residence, and whoever interferes with it will have to reckon with me, and lastly,

the pay of the army, and if any arrears are due I will be responsible for them and in fact am ready to pay them off now.'

All replied "Whoever interferes with the Harem of the late Nawab is a man of no faith, but it is nevertheless necessary to arrange for the government of the State, so that the honour of the deceased ruler may be upheld and continue. Shahzad Masih replied: 'This can be done if you accept Qudsia Begum as your ruler and obey her.'

This proposal was accepted, and a document was drafted and signed by all important persons present. It ran as follows: 'The following agreement is executed by the relatives of the ruler and the Chiefs of the Bhopal State, date 25th Moharram 1235 A.H., attested by Qazi Mahommed Yaqub, Mahommed Qadir Baksh, Amir Mahommed Khan, Jalal Mahommed Khan, Moiz Mahommed Khan son of Nawab Ghaus Mahommed Khan, Shaikh Abdul Quddus, Karam Mahommed Khan and Mahommed Din Khan. These few lines are written to say 'That Nawab Naziruddaulah Nazar Mahommed Khan Bahadur was a ruler of Bhopal by right of descent and birth. Now as the Nawab has departed to a better world by the will of God, leaving his wife and daughter, therefore as the right of succession

goes to the child of the deceased and the Begum Saheba is the consort of the Nawab, it has been settled that in all cases affecting revenue and administration her orders will be obeyed throughout this State. Now we all, relatives, brothers and kinsmen, are willing and ready to act according to the orders of the Begum of the deceased, and do not think it well for us to deviate in the least degree from her will. Any person among the brothers, relatives or servants of the deceased whomsoever the Begum may give the right to do any work for her, will do every act of administration according to her commands. These few lines have been written as an authority for the above and to serve as a bond. Dated 25th Moharrum, 1235 A.H., corresponding to 14th November, 1819 A.D., and 1227 F.'

When this document was completed and the bond was duly signed, a copy of it was sent to the British Agency.

It was further settled that whoever was betrothed to Nawab Nazar Mahommed's daughter (Sikandar Begum) should be ruler of Bhopal. As however the daughter was a child it was decided that the Qudsia Begum should act as Ruler and to whomsoever she delegated her authority he should be obeyed by all. The little girl who was subsequently to become the

most far sighted and capable Lady of her time was present at the gathering and Nawab Ghaus Mahommed Khan placed her in the arms of Hakim Shadzad Maseh and said 'carry out the duties of State and serve her as faithfully as you did the late Nawab.'

He replied 'This is impossible for me as all my ambition was centred in the Nawab and has died with him, Mian Karam Mahommed Khan must be her guardian.'

This suggestion was hotly contested, and in the end it was decided that Karam Mahommed should supervise the administration, while Shahzad Maseh promised to assist him. Both the State and its ruler deserve a thousand congratulations at having secured two such loyal, faithful and self sacrificing men at this juncture.

This arrangement was approved by all the subjects and officials, and it was decided to communicate the proposals to Major Henley the British Agent for his attestation on his arrival in Bhopal.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

SELECTION OF A FUTURE HUSBAND FOR SIKANDAR BEGUM. LETTER FROM THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS. DISSENSIONS.

THE Political Agent arrived a few days later and after being informed, pressed Hakim Shahzad Maseh to accept the Diwanship, but he refused, saying that although he intended to lead a private life and abstain from being present at the Court he would obey and assist Karam Mahommed Khan.

Major Henley then advised the Qudsia Begum to select a boy to be the future husband of Sikandar Begum and the Ruler of the State, as it was likely to prove injurious to the State to leave it without a ruler for a long period in such troublous times; it seems probable that the desire of Major Henley and the leading members of the State for a male Ruler instead of a female was due to consideration of the weakness of the female nature.

As Amir Mahommed Khan was the nearest relative, his eldest son Munir Mahommed Khan was selected, though the consent of Qudsia Begum was not obtained without difficulty.

Sekandar Begum

[*Face page* 32

Hakim Shahzad Maseh then asked Amir Mahommed Khan for his son and he agreed at first, but subsequently urged his own claim to the Gadi (Throne), and opened a correspondence with Major Henley on the subject. That Officer reminded Amir Mahommed Khan of the treaty between the British Government and Bhopal in which mention was made of the Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan and his children, and further he referred to the bond signed by the Nawab's brothers, Ministers, and leading Nobles which had the same ends in view as the British Government, and he appealed to Amir Mahommed's good sense and wisdom, and urged him to accept the arrangement which could only be beneficial to the State.

Amir Mahommed Khan accepted Major Henley's advice and warning, and handed over Munir Mahommed Khan to the Qudsia Begum and executed an agreement not to interfere in affairs of State; these arrangements were duly reported to the Resident at Indore and the Governor General of India by Qudsia Begum.

Sir John Malcolm, the Agent to the Governor General in Central India, in writing to condole with Qudsia Begum over the death of her husband said: "Believe me to be your sincere friend as in the past in every matter, and remain

assured that your State will be safe and protected by the grace of God and by the good-will of the Company's Government. Let your mind be at rest under every condition"; and later on in the letter he said "I praise your wisdom and sagacity in selecting Munir Mahommed Khan as future ruler of the State, and appointing Karam Mahommed Khan as manager. If God wills it there will be no dissension among the members of the State, and Major Henley will give his full attention to its affairs."

The Marquis of Hastings, Governor General of India sent a letter of condolence in which he expressed his satisfaction at the arrangement made and promised his help in the future. The letter was to the following effect:

My dear Begum Saheba,

Your kind letter informing me of the sorrowful incident, that is the lamentable death of your husband Nawab Nazir-ud-daulah Nazar Mahommed Khan Bahadur on the 22nd Mohurrum 1235. A.H. in Islamnager fort by the accidental discharge of a pistol has reached me.

The same letter informs me that your relatives and the Nobles of the State when gathered together on the occasion of the deceased's Fateha to condole with you, unani-

mously agreed to obey you and your daughter, and that you, thinking that the administration cannot be carried on without an intelligent ruler of suitable position, have adopted and placed on the gadi Nawab Munir Mahommed Khan, nephew of the late Nawab; and have appointed during his minority, Karam Mahommed Khan uncle of the deceased, an experienced administrator, to assist him. You have also written that you have made no changes in the old officers of the State and look forward to receiving the kindness and favour of the Government in the same manner as heretofore, and you have expressed your loyalty and fidelity to the Government. As I have very highly esteemed the deceased Nawab for his faithfulness and loyalty to our Government, this news has caused me acute sorrow and my grief has been doubled by consideration of yours, but as this unavoidable calamity has been willed by God and every one has to tread the same path, I am constrained to submit with patience. I advise you to be patient and clear the burden of this grief from your heart and to console others whom it affects.

You have done well in adopting Nawab Munir Mahommed Khan and seating him on

the gadi and in appointing the deceased's uncle to assist him. I know that the above arrangement is the result of your wisdom and sagacity, and may God bless you and all your friends and wellwishers.

You may rest assured that the officers of Government will not hesitate to protect and help the State, and will work for its prosperity and welfare in conjunction with you.

There is nothing more to write. Hoping to be favoured with a letter regarding your welfare.

I remain,
Your sincere friend and wellwisher
SD/- HASTINGS.

Beginning of Dissension.

Only a few years passed after the adoption of Munir Khan and commencement of the new regime when Amir Khan began to show his hand and instigated Nawab Munir Khan to act in opposition to the advice of his councillors. His first act was to lend his support to one Jamal Mahommed Khan who revolted and seized some territory. After this an attempt was made to murder Hakim Shahzad Maseh. The circumstances were as follows :—Hakim Shahzad Maseh was accustomed to accompany the Tazia of one Mir Ghulam Shah who was of the Shia Sect on the

10th day of Mohurrum. This Tazia was constructed in Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan's mausoleum and was escorted by Sikandar Begum's body-guard regiment of Cavalry. The intention of the mischief makers was to cause a religious riot and with the assistance of a number of Afghans of the army, whom they had gained over, to murder Shahzad Maseh, and after his removal to seize the reins of Government from the Begum.

Both the Qudsia Begum and Shahzad Maseh received information of the plot, and the former sent her daughter, Sikandar Begum, to Nawab Moiz Mahommed Khan's palace for safety. Shahzad Maseh who was a brave and courageous man decided to make no difference in his plans, but he directed his adopted son Imdad Maseh to kill all the females of his family to save their honour in the event of his death. He then mounted his famous horse ' Mahboob ' and rode towards Munir Khan's party and leaving his companions behind, advanced with a few mounted attendants, and ordered them to beat Munir Khan's followers with the butts of their lances as they were too contemptible to use arms on.

On Shahzad Maseh giving this order, Munir Khan's party were so confounded by his courage,

that they dispersed, and even Munir Khan took shelter in Karam Mahommed Khan's house. The Tazia was then conducted to the place of immersion as usual and the incident ended.

Munir Khan although only fourteen or fifteen years old then proceeded to interfere actively in the conduct of affairs, and greatly to the annoyance of Qudsia Begum surrounded himself with a party of unscrupulous and rebellious adventurers: this coupled with his extravagant habits resulted in Mian Karam Mahommed Khan and Shahzad Maseh resigning their posts, although urged by the Begum not to do so.

When matters had reached a crisis, the Political Agent wrote to Shahzad Maseh and pointed out that the Nawab was quite ignorant of the work of proper administration of the State, and that as it was impossible to carry on the duties of a ruler without their help, if they left him to his own devices matters would go from bad to worse and blame would attach to them. This had the required effect and both resumed their work, but were unable to restrain Munir Khan's extravagant conduct. Although Qudsia Begum had insisted on Munir Khan living near her palace in order to supervise and control him, she was unable to do so, as he defied her authority and caused her every possible trouble and anxiety,

both on account of the proposed union with her daughter and the fear that he would ruin the State. Major Henley who had been a staunch friend to the ruling family and of the State had died, and Qudsia Begum after mature consideration decided to dissolve the betrothal between her daughter and Munir Khan. She therefore addressed a depressed and dejected letter to Mr. Maddock, at that time Political Agent, which ran as follows :—" The late Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan did his utmost to maintain this State. It was he who saved the country from the depredations of the Mahrattas and through his efforts a treaty was concluded between him and the Marquis of Hastings, and from the date of that treaty he left no stone unturned to prove his loyal adherence to it. When he died the ruling family and nobles of the State acknowledged the rights of myself and my daughter and agreed to obey us, and an agreement to that effect was signed and bears their signatures and is attested by the Kazis and Muftis. Hakim Shahzad Maseh and Karam Mahommed Khan who were responsible for the agreement, considered that it would be advisable to select a future husband for my daughter, and so maintain the treaty with the British Government in perpetuity. The late Major Henley was present at the proceedings

and Nawab Munir Mahommed Khan was selected, though I objected to the choice as I knew both his father's and his own quarrelsome natures and had no hope of peace in the future. To remove my objections an agreement was taken from Munir Mahommed Khan's father promising not to interfere in the management of the State, and guaranteeing his obedience to me, and this was attested by the Kazis and Muftis and my kinsmen.

"Nawab Munir Mahommed Khan was only fourteen years of age and is devoid of wisdom and sense and refuses to obey me, and is moreover heading a revolt against my authority. I trust that out of regard for me and my daughter you will not allow him to defy my authority and ruin the State and bring destruction on this family, which relies on the first article of the treaty which states that the friends and enemies of one party shall be the friends and enemies of the other. Jamal Mahommed Khan, who is an adviser of Munir Mahommed Khan, first embezzled six or seven thousand rupees and then came to me for protection. Subsequently he rebelled and is now encouraging Munir Mahommed Khan to ruin the State and using every effort to that end. For myself I put my trust in the Company's Government and yourself."

Bhopal City from Fort Fatehgarh

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Attempts at conciliation. A plot fails. Disturbances. Jahangir Mahommed Khan selected as Sikandar's husband.

Mr. Maddock sent his assistant Captain Johnstone to endeavour to settle the quarrel and if necessary to assist Qudsia Begum, and he warned and remonstrated with Munir Khan. In one letter he wrote: "The Sirkar (Qudsia Begum) is the ruler of the State and you must act according to her advice and you cannot be permitted to interfere in the Government of the State. You have disobeyed and opposed her commands and desire to make changes in the management of the State without authority.' In another he referred to the agreements confirming the Begum as ruler of the State, and the promise of Amir Khan his father to abstain from interference, and later on he pointed out that his betrothal to the Sikandar Begum had not been mentioned in those agreements and that if continued to act contrary to her mother's wishes the betrothal would be cancelled.

Mr. Maddock in referring to a letter from Captain Johnstone wrote to Munir Khan: "It is obvious that the Begum Sahiba has the support of the officers of the State, and that you have raised an army with the intention of gaining possession of the State by force. This is very bad and God only knows who the illomened person is who has given you such evil advice. You should understand that any one interfering in State affairs is the enemy of the British Government, and if hostilities ensue we shall be obliged to assist the Begum. What justification have you for enrolling a force? Your people have attacked the frontier posts and forts for no reason, and if the Begum and her officers had not acted with restraint troubles would have resulted."

Afterwards he urged Munir Khan to dismiss his followers in another letter in which he referred to the treaty between Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan and the British Government, and said that that Government would see that the provisions were observed to the Nawab's descendants generation by generation. Nazar Mahommed Khan's only issue was his daughter the Sikandar Begum, and the Government would support her. She would be ruler and after her marriage her child would succeed. And he

further recommended Munir Khan to consider the facts which he was well aware of, and if he had any representation to make he should prefer it to Captain Johnstone. In a subsequent letter he wrote : " The Nawab Begum has full authority over the State and you should obey her. The British Government will not permit you to interfere and act contrary to her wishes, a copy of the document signed both by the great and minor officials has been sent to you and you have seen the bond of your father Amir Khan. In that paper obedience to the Begum is expressly stated and she has the power to forfeit your succession." Mr. Maddock further again reminded Munir Khan of Nazar Mahommed Khan's treaty with the British Government whose intention it was to see that the provisions were carried out, and he referred also to Sikandar Begum's rights and the rights of her children.

In spite of Munir Khan's outrageous conduct Qudsia Begum proposed that he should sign an agreement engaging not to quarrel with her, and if he dismissed his followers she would be prepared to fix an allowance for his maintenance.

These warnings had no effect on Munir Khan who continued as before and succeeded in gaining over a large number of faithless soldiers. He then gained possession of the Fort of Raisen by

a conspiracy, and was in touch with a number of disloyal Jats who garrisoned the fort of Islamnagar, and a few persons within the walls of Bhopal were also favourable to his cause. He and Jamal Mahommed Khan next assembled their forces and made a progress through the City of Bhopal which ended at Munir Khan's residence. Jamal Khan Mahommed Din Khan and Ibrahim Khan then gathered their supporters together and set to work to make a plot. After much discussion it was arranged that the houses of all the prominent supporters of Qudsia Begum should be surrounded some hours before day break, and that guards should be placed before dawn at the heads of all the streets of the city, which might then be looted without fear of a surprise attack by the other party. The women were to be dishonoured and the officials prevented from going to their duties or homes, water and food was to be cut off, and it was hoped that the affair would be settled in one day.

News of the plot and the plans of the conspirators reached Hakim Shahzad Maseh after the evening prayer, and he summoned all the prominent officials and held a consultation with them. The general opinion was that all should go to their houses and arrange to defend them. At this juncture Bakshi Bahadur Mahom-

med Khan arrived and his advice was asked. He was strongly against the proposal to await the attack of the insurgents and to allow them to gain possession of the gates and important points in the city, and he was of opinion that if this course were followed, and if any general looting of the city took place, many men who were adherents of the Begum would join the rebels through fear of their lives or with hope of partaking in the loot. He strongly urged that the gates of the city and streets should be guarded, and the insurgents should be boldly attacked before they secured any advantage. All agreed to this proposal and the carrying out of this plan was left to his discretion.

The Bakshi then asked all the nobles and prominent persons to assemble at Hakim Shahzad Maseh's house, and said that he would attack the rebels with the forces under his own command which he could rely on, and he asked Shahzad Maseh to keep himself informed as to the course of events so that if necessary he might come to his assistance with reinforcements. The Bakshi then placed 150 men of his own force, 250 Sikhs under a leader named Kan Singh and 150 Afghans at the Palace gate and furnished them with ammunition. After that he surrounded the houses of Mian Jamal Mahommed Khan and

Mahommed Din Khan so that they could not come out and assist Munir Khan. Meanwhile a regiment of the body-guard and some other men assembled at Shahzad Maseh's and Karam Mahommed Khan's houses, and the Bakshi with only 500 men of his own command reached the Ghariali gate of the Diwankhana. At the time 1700 Afghans of Munir Khan's force were asleep at the gate with only two or three men on guard, so the Bakshi directed a Havildar to go forward, and if challenged, to kill the sentry. This was done and the Bakshi fired a pistol to rouse the Afghans and immediately attacked them. The struggle did not last long and those of the Afghans who resisted were killed and the remainder who did not escape were captured. During the fight a man who had surrendered to the Bakshi, and who had been ordered to give up his arms and lie down with those who had fallen, fired a shot which grazed the Bakshi's head, and the latter promptly cut him in two with his sword, and went on fighting without letting his men know that he had been wounded. Desultory fighting went on for four or five days, shots were fired at the Begum's palace, and the guns in Fatehgarh fort were turned on the rebels. In the end Munir Mahommed Khan and his force were hard pressed for food and water and sent a

NAWAB JAHANGIR MAHOMMED KHAN,
HUSBAND OF SIKANDAR BEGUM

[*Face page* 46

piteous request to Qudsia Begum for relief, and she was merciful enough to send them supplies. Shortly after they surrendered, and Munir Mahommed Khan was brought into her presence. She took pity on him and treated him with clemency. She however banished Jamal Mahommed Khan and the evil companions of Munir Khan and despatched Kan Singh and his Sikhs to turn Amir Mahommed Khan out of the fort of Raisen.

On arrival there Kan Singh was received with the fire of the guns of the fort by Amir Khan and was obliged to retire and camp out of range on the banks of a tank. Karam Mahommed Khan however succeeded in inducing Amir Khan to evacuate the fort, and he escaped to Sironj and thence to Tonk.

Islamnagar fort was also surrendered by the Jats who begged for forgiveness and for arrears of pay due from Munir Mahommed Khan. Both petitions were granted, though their truculent ringleader Budh Singh was banished. The Begum then decided to dissolve the betrothal between Munir Khan and her daughter, and he was obliged to relinguish all claims to her hand and to the State, and executed an agreement to that effect. It was then decided by the Begum and her advisers to betroth Sikandar Begum to

Jahangir Mahommed Khan, the younger brother of Munir Mahommed Khan, and after taking Munir's written approval, Mr. Maddock was communicated with and he attested the document. Jahangir Mahommed Khan was then formally adopted by the Qudsia Begum. Amir Mahommed Khan and his wife also sent their consent in writing and the former stated: " I have given Jahangir Mahommed Khan to the Nawab Qudsia Begum to be adopted by her of my own free will, and I have surrendered my rights as his parent. He should accept Qudsia Begum as his real mother and he should make it the object of his life to fulfill his duties to her. She is his master."

The Qudsia Begum also executed a bond which ran as follows:—"As Sikandar Begum has been betrothed to Jahangir Mahommed Khan, the State, its government, and all the duties pertaining thereto have been entrusted to him, therefore both my children are owners of the State. The best thing for him is to please and obey me. The ceremony of marriage will be carried out at a suitable time."

Amir Mahommed Khan, however, again began to make difficulties and to cause obstruction, but owing to the influence of the Political Agent this new trouble did not come to anything. Mian

Karam Mahommed Khan remained as Chief Minister of the State as before, the betrothal rites were performed and Jahangir Mahommed Khan received the title of "Nawab Nazir-ud-Daulah." As he was only eight or nine years old suitable persons were appointed as tutors and guardians, and the age of nineteen or twenty was fixed for investing him with full authority over the State. All these arrangements were formally communicated to the Political Agent and the sanction of the Governor General was conveyed through Major Evans, Political Agent, in the following terms.

"When Jahangir Mahommed Khan is married to Sikandar Begum his succession to the gadi will be carried out by the Nawab Qudsia Begum and he will be recognised as Nawab of Bhopal."

Jahangir Mahommed Khan first received instruction in ordinary subjects of education and later on was taught administration of the State. Qudsia Begum also gave similar instruction to her daughter. The latter eventually held her court and signed papers of State. Jahangir Mahommed Khan however, was indolent and unwilling to learn, and caused his adopted mother anxiety. The Political Agent also endeavoured to infuse him with some energy and gave him advice. Jahangir was now growing up,

and if the former troubles were to be avoided it was high time to impress on him a sense of his future responsibilities. Both Mr. Maddock and Major Evans had been transferred to other posts and Hakim Shahzad Maseh was dead. The result was soon apparent and the Qudsia Begum's anxieties increased, and she took an agreement from Jahangir Mahommed Khan which she attempted to have attested by the British Agency. Mr. Wilkinson had only been appointed a few days previously, and Amir Mahommed Khan and Asad Ali Khan who were noted for their intrigues, and had done so much harm to the State, had been working to secure the support of the Political Agent, and the result was that Qudsia Begum's request was refused. Mr. Wilkinson wrote as follows :—

" You should not expect the help of the British Government in dealing with any action of the Nawab during his minority as he was not responsible at the time for either good or bad deeds, and the signatures to the agreement whether obtained willingly or unwillingly are of equal value. He cannot be held to be bound by them, but any arrangements for his benefit will be readily accepted."

No doubt Qudsia Begum's action was due to her anxiety and the Political Agent's view was

correct. She hoped that Mr. Wilkinson would help her as former Agent's had done, and the agreement would serve the purpose of preventing friction in the future.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Visit of Jahangir Mahommed Khan to Lord William Bentinck. Sikandar Begum's marriage. Troubles begin.

If Mr. Wilkinson had been more in sympathy with the Qudsia Begum it is probable that he would not have refused her request. He however, gave his support to Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan whose aims were those of Asad Ali Khan and others. It was his custom to assist the Nawab in every way, sometimes having him to stay with him at the Agency in Sehore and at others raising objections to the method of his education and the selection of his tutors. Complaints were also made about the insufficiency of the Nawab's allowances, and these matters, small in themselves, tended towards a dangerous situation. Three or four years passed in this way when information of the intended visit of Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General, to Saugor was received in 1832. Qudsia Begum, considering that Jahangir Mahommed Khan was to be the future ruler of Bhopal, and had

been adopted by her and was being trained with that object in view, decided to send him to visit the Governor General, and he left for Saugor in January 1833 with great pomp and ceremony, taking with him many valuable objects for presentation to Lord William Bentinck. Asad Ali Khan, Raja Khushwakt Rai, Karam Mahommed Khan, Bakshi Sidq Mahommed Khan his son, Amjud Beg and other leading Sirdars accompanied him.

A few days before his departure Major Evans had returned to the Sehore Agency temporarily, and he shared Qudsia Begum's anxiety that Jahangir Mahommed Khan might be guilty of some inadvisable conduct or action while away, and their fears turned out to be well grounded.

When the Governor General came to return Jahangir's visit the latter asked for a private interview, and his request was granted though Major Evans was present at the time. Jahangir Mahommed Khan asked the Governor General to direct that his marriage should be carried out and that he should be granted full powers to govern the State. Lord William Bentinck directed Major Evans to see that the marriage was celebrated after explaining the position to Qudsia Begum, but he told the Nawab to be patient as regards the grant of his powers. See-

ing that the Nawab at the time was only thirteen years old it seems clear that he was put up to make the request by others who wished to obtain control over the State in his name, and oust the Qudsia Begum.

When the Nawab returned to Bhopal, Qudsia Begum, well knowing that Amir Mahommed Khan, his father, was at the bottom of all the past friction, decided that he should live apart from his parents. Amir Mahommed Khan was ordered to take up his residence at Raisen as before, and those persons suspected of intriguing and fomenting trouble were either imprisoned or exiled. She also surrounded him with trustworthy and respectable companions who never allowed him out of their sight. It was further arranged that certain kinds of cases should be disposed of before him and the usual daily orders should be issued in his presence. This did not suit the Nawab's inclinations, and he made several complaints to the British authorities. Meanwhile Mr. Wilkinson had been reappointed Political Agent in place of Major Evans, and a rumour became current that he was desirous of marrying Jahangir Mahommed Khan to some other girl. He however, denied this in a letter in which he said : " Sidiq Ali Khan from Nagpur approached me on the subject, but I explained to

him that the matter was impossible." This disposed of the rumour.

Meanwhile the Nawab objected to the grant by Qudsia Begum of jagirs to certain faithful officials for their services, and he addressed the Resident and the Governor General on the subject, although the Political Agent pointed out that the Begum as ruler of the State was quite within her rights in rewarding either faithful subjects or members of the army; at the same time, however, he wrote to the Begum urging her to have the marriage celebrated at an early date, and he suggested that the sanads (deeds) of the jagirs and rewards should bear the signature of the Nawab as in the time of Munir Mahommed Khan. He subsequently wrote as follows:—"Wazir Mahommed Khan and others were desirous of taking the Nawab away with them and raising dissensions in the State. Measures, however, were adopted, and both Sironj and Bhilsa warned not to receive him, and their evil intentions were frustrated. The Governor General was also informed, and he has instructed me to say that so long as the marriage of the Nawab is delayed there is no hope of any end to these dissensions. If the marriage is performed no suspicion will remain, and surely it is time for the Begum to accomplish it in order to allay any

suspicion which may exist as to her motives for postponing matters. I as your sincere friend desire the same, and trust that a date may be fixed and the ceremony performed in a happy and auspicious manner." Soon after a letter to the same effect was received from the Resident at Indore.

The Begum did not relish the advice, as her object in delaying the nuptials was the desire to satisfy herself fully as to the character of the Nawab.

Owing to the pressure from the Agency, Residency and the Governor General himself, the Begum at last decided that the marriage should be performed a few days after the receipt of the letters referred to. She, however, did not look on the marriage as an occasion for rejoicing and she decided that it should be a perfectly informal one.

A Chobdar (mace bearer) was therefore sent to Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan to request him to come to the Mosque and to tell him that the Nikah (marriage) would be celebrated, and that the Qudsia Begum and her daughter were proceeding there as soon as the latter was dressed. On reaching the Mosque the Begum sent for Raja Khushwakt Rai, who arrived with his attendants and a regiment of the bodyguard.

The Upper Lake, Bhopal.

Nawab Moiz Mahommed Khan and Faujdar Mahommed Khan were also summoned, together with other leading men, and all were puzzled and could not imagine why they had been called. The Qudsia Begum was much incensed and reproached both her daughter, Jahangir Mahommed Khan and all present, as the Nawab refused to come, and the party remained in the mosque from Zohar to Isha prayers. Several requests were sent to him to come and he replied: "As my sister is as yet unmarried it does not become me to marry before she does," and no other course remained but to postpone the ceremony.

A new difficulty now arose, as Sikandar Begum had reached an age when her consent to the marriage became very necessary according to the tenets of her religion, and she was unwilling, as she dreaded future troubles (which in fact occurred later). Finally she consented to the marriage on the condition that the Nawab executed an agreement with her defining her position, and that the document be attested by Mr. Wilkinson. He, however, refused to do this as being opposed to official custom, and he continued to urge that the marriage should take place soon.

Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan professed himself to be anxious for the marriage, and

accused Qudsia Begum of delaying it under one pretext or another, and made as much as possible of his grievance. Finally matters came to a crisis, and Mr. Wilkinson proceeded to Bhopal and informed Qudsia Begum that he would not return to Sehore till he had heard the sound of the drums proclaiming the Nawab's marriage. In addition to this he sent his Mir Munshi to Qudsia Begum to persuade her to agree, and to threaten her with the displeasure of the Governor General. She however remained firm in her refusal, so Mr. Wilkinson summoned Raja Khushwakt Rai, and God knows what instructions he gave him. The result was that he remonstrated both with Qudsia Begum and Sikandar, and warned them that they ran the risk of being confined in the Fort and of losing the State. Sikandar Begum then drew out an agreement between the Nawab and herself and requested Qudsia Begum to sign and attest it. Qudsia Begum told her that she would be her companion both in grief and joy and agreed to attest the bond.

Qudsia Begum throughout had not been opposed to the marriage, and her action in delaying it had been due to a desire to ensure the happiness both of the Nawab and of her daughter, and to prevent quarrels and misunderstandings.

Besides that, the Nawab was only sixteen years old, and in her opinion was full young for marriage or for the responsibilities of governing the State.

The Nawab was actuated by a desire to get hold of the reins of office as soon as possible, and in this he had the support of Mr. Wilkinson. Why this should have been has always remained a riddle to me, seeing that the Qudsia Begum and her responsible and capable officials were ruling the State well and there were no disturbances. It was unusual for Political Officers to apply pressure and use threats, and Mr. Wilkinson's conduct of the affair is therefore difficult to explain, though no doubt his action was due to a desire to put a stop to dissensions and the hasty and ill-advised acts of Jahangir's supporters. It may have been that the Nawab deceived him, but if Qudsia Begum and her advisers had delayed in choosing a husband for Sikandar Begum after the affair with Munir, there would have been no necessity for Mr. Wilkinson's action. The affair remains shrouded in mystery, but there is no doubt that the bloodshed and misery which followed was due to the erroneous and hasty action of someone. Finally the marriage took place on the 17th of Zill Hij, 1250, A.H., corresponding to April 1835, A.D. After the ceremony the marriage party visited both the gardens of the

late Nawab and that of Hakim Shahzad Maseh. Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan signed and sealed a bond in which he undertook to act in subordination to Qudsia Begum's wishes, both on behalf of himself and his adherents. The contents of the bond were as follows :—

"The Nawab Qudsia Begum has shown her regard for me from the time that I was eight years of age by appointing instructors for my guidance and she has brought me up from that time, and she extends her favour to me now. As she observed signs of ability and wisdom in me she is desirous of giving me her daughter in marriage, but as she has certain doubts in her heart I write the following lines of my own free will and without constraint from anybody, that I will not take any other woman to wife when I have married her daughter, neither will I ever mention such a thing. I will try to carry out all her orders and wishes and I will not permit anyone to oppose her. I consider it advisable that my parents and relatives should reside at Raisen fort as before, and I will only permit them to visit Bhopal as ordinary guests. I take the Begum as my mother, and as I have attained to this high position owing to my marriage with her daughter, I will give her my hearty obedience always. I pray God to be my witness to the above promises,

and if I depart from the conditions of this agreement I trust that the officers of the exalted (British) Government may consider that I am false."

Future events showed that the conditions of the bond were not observed and that the document was worthless.

The marriage had hardly been completed when Jahangir Mahommed Khan, casting aside all ideas of right and wrong and family feeling, and carried away by ambition, was induced to join in a plot against the lives of the Begums and for the destruction of the family.

On the occasion of a festival, armed soldiers were hidden in the city, and an attacking party were kept outside, while another body of soldiers were at the Nawab's residence. Fortunately news reached Qudsia Begum and she cleverly frustrated the plans of the plotters. Saadullah Khan one of the leaders was pursued till he escaped from the State, and the Nawab was put under supervision till the Political Agent enquired into the matter. He wrote to the Nawab saying that after his warnings and plans he had been in hopes that things would go smoothly, but this affair had taken place and it would have been better if Jahangir Mahommed Khan had exercised patience a little longer. The Nawab

placed his version of the affair before Mr. Wilkinson and made out that he was the injured party. Even Mr. Wilkinson's warnings and threats to the Nawab were couched in such terms that they gave the impression that he sympathised with him, and this no doubt was the case so far as the struggle for his rights was concerned. As a description of each event would be very lengthy and take much space it will be better to give extracts of the correspondence which took place at the time between Qudsia Begum and the British authorities.

Qudsia Begum, finding that she could get no support from the Political Agent in keeping Jahangir Mahommed Khan out of his powers as Ruler, thought that if the Governor General was made aware of all the facts some favourable arrangements could be come to; she therefore addressed a long letter to Lord Aukland, then Governor General, and the gist of it was as follows :—

The treaty made by Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan with the British Government made no mention of Wazir Mahommed Khan, but it was stipulated that the succession to the Gadi of Bhopal should go to the lineal descendants of the Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan. When he died his only issue was one daughter, viz., the

Begum Sikandar. The third day after his death all his relatives and the leading men of the State bound themselves to obey me and my rule, and the bond was drawn and attested by the Kazis and Muftis.

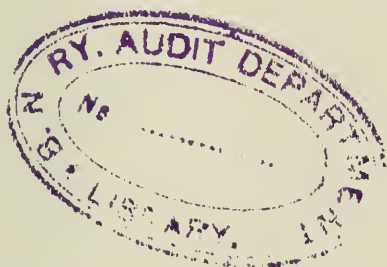
Further on referring to the adoption of Munir Mahommed Khan, its sanction by the Governor General and its disastrous consequences, she mentioned the betrothal of Jahangir Mahommed Khan to her daughter, and his succession to the Gadi and his petition to the Governor General at Saugor that his marriage might be performed. This was approved by the Governor General, and both Major Evans and Mr. Wilkinson gave her both advice and warnings which she replied to by saying that the Nawab neither desired the marriage nor had reached a suitable age. Next she urged that the Nawab's relations wished to get control of the State, and the marriage was simply a pretext, so to defeat their intrigues she asked that a bond which should bear the authority of the Governor General excluding them from all interference, should be taken from them. This was not approved, and the Nawab grew up and pressed for the marriage, so Qudsia Begum took a bond from him and again endeavoured but without success to obtain the attestation and approval of the Governor General. The marriage

then took place, and Qudsia Begum was in hopes that Jahangir would act in subordination to her and in accordance with the bond promising to obey her which he had given. This was, however, not the case, and nothing but trouble ensued. Qudsia Begum then kept quiet and the Nawab visited Mr. Wilkinson at Sehore in connection with matters relating to his education, and while there collected a number of seditious and disaffected persons round him and with some twelve or fourteen hundred horsemen and infantry prepared to take military action. She, however, sent some leading officials to Mr. Wilkinson, and he tactfully persuaded the Nawab to dismiss the greater part of the gathering, reassuring him at the same time. Mr. Wilkinson and the Nawab then went to Bhopal and stayed there for fifteen days, and while there the Nawab through Mr. Wilkinson urged that he might be granted full powers as Ruler of the State. Qudsia Begum replied that she would surrender the powers to him when she was satisfied that he was fit to exercise them, and she stated that if the Political Agent was satisfied with him he might grant him the powers. Afterwards arrangements were made to provide the Nawab with sufficient funds for his expenses, and tutors for his instruction and a mounted bodyguard was appointed. Judicial

cases were sent to him for disposal every third day, and a bond was signed at the instance of the Political Agent both by him and the leading men of the State defining his and their positions. An agreement was also signed by the Nawab engaging not to join in plots against the lives of Qudsia or Sikandar Begum, and a similar agreement was signed by them. In spite of the grant of funds and other arrangements for his comfort fourteen days later he made a plot to murder the Begums, and summoned a body of evil men who actually camped outside the city, and he distributed armed Afghans disguised as travellers throughout the city. The plot was abortive, as news of it reached Qudsia Begum, and the state troops dispersed the gathering and arrested some of the leaders. Some of these were under arrest still and others had been banished. The Political Agent was informed and requested to take steps through Government to restrain the Nawab, and induce him to dismiss certain mischief-makers who were with him. The Political Agent however, replied that the Nawab refused to be guided by his advice, and he suggested that Qudsia Begum should warn and remonstrate with him. This was done, and she even provided him with funds for the travelling expenses of the men to be got rid of. The Nawab, however,

did nothing, and the Begum now requested that the British Government should take action against the Nawab who by plotting against her life had sinned against God and the Prophet, and she asked that three English Officers like Mr. Maddock and several persons acquainted with the administration of the State might be sent to hold an impartial investigation into matters. She professed to be ready to abide by the orders of the Governor General on the results of their enquiry, and ended by saying: "It is a thousand times better to die with a good name than to live with a bad one."

This letter was sent to the Political Agent with the request that it might be forwarded to the Governor General. He agreed to do so, but at the same time pointed out to her that he saw no hope of any peace between them; as she complained against the Nawab's intentions towards her, and she refused to grant him the rights which he was justified in claiming. He stated that she had not affixed her signature to the agreement with the Nawab, and that his companions put this down to her unmotherly sentiments towards him. It was true that he had sent for Saidulla Khan and others to assist him, but had since dismissed them. The Political Agent asked Qudsia Begum to send Raja Khushwakht Rai and Saiyid

Ali Shah with certain papers to him, and ended by saying that the quarrels between them were the cause of much distress to him, and that it was advisable for her to grant the Nawab his just rights and retain what was due to her, and that God's pleasure and her reputation rested in her doing this.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Mr. Wilkinson's efforts to compose the differences between Qudsia Begum and Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan. The Latter raises a Force.

It seems clear that Qudsia Begum's object in petitioning the Governor General was that she believed that the Nawab had secured the support of the Political Agent, and that she despaired of gaining her ends through his assistance, and she wrote to him to this effect. Subsequently, though disappointed previously, she applied again to the Political Agent for assistance.

In this letter she referred to her having ruled the State satisfactorily and quietly for the past seventeen years and to Mr. Wilkinson having been at Sehore for six years, and his knowledge that she always carried out the wishes of the supreme Government; she referred to the Nawab's violent action in collecting evil disposed persons and to his plot against her life, and said that as she was informed that the Nawab had sent his agents to Indore and *Agra she had been obliged

*The Governor-General was at Agra at the time.

to do so also. She begged Mr. Wilkinson to take measures to prevent the Nawab from plotting, and asked him to protect her life, and again quoted the words of a section of the treaty with the Government that the "friends or enemies of one party are the same for the other," and she affirmed her readiness to abide by the orders of Government.

In reply to this, Mr. Wilkinson in a letter dated November 22nd, 1836, said: "When I was proposed for the appointment of Political Agent at Bhopal, I visited the Governor General, and he told me that he was informed that the administration of the State was superior to that of other Native States, and that it was in the hands of capable, reliable and faithful officials. I also during the past six years have observed that justice is meted out by the officers of the State, and I am well aware of your benevolent and high character. I also am of opinion that the Government of the State has been superior to that in other States, and I have informed the Governor General in detail of this."

Afterwards expressing his sorrow at the disputes between the parties and their failure to act on his advice he declared that although the Nawab was impatient and hasty, the root of the matter was his demand for his rights. Describing

a conversation with Hakim Bakar Ali he wrote: "If you will only consider the matter fully you will see that the Nawab has no other object but to demand his rights. You have seated the Nawab on the gadi with the sanction of the supreme Government, and have executed a bond to hand over the rule of the State to him when he reached the age of nineteen. You have received a robe of honour for him from the Governor General, and now that he has attained the required age and demands the rights set out in the bonds how can he be refused? The Nawab as he could not obtain his rights has raised disturbances and acted in an undesirable and improper manner, but you have promised to act according to the views of the supreme Government, and it is to be hoped that there will be no disturbance and intriguers will be restrained. A copy of your letter has been sent to the Nawab, and he has informed me through his representative that no trouble will be caused by him for the present."

Mr. Wilkinson after some further advice ended his letter by saying "The matter is in your hands—act as you deem fit."

Mr. Wilkinson at the same time addressed the Nawab and sent him a copy of the Begum's letter. He advised the Nawab to be guided by the Begum's advice and wishes, and recommended

him to treat the old and faithful officers of the State with kindness and consideration. He said that if this was done he would find the Begum to be well disposed towards him and his friend, but if both sides practised deceit and treachery owing to their own selfish aims and motives, they would earn a bad name before the world and the displeasure of God. He asked the Nawab to inform him which course he intended to take.

Qudsia Begum next requested that the dispute might be settled by Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Carnac the Resident at Indore, and requested the latter to visit Bhopal. He, however, regretted that he was unable to come, urging pressure of work, and saying that he did not desire to intervene in quarrels between herself and her relatives, moreover he had little hope that even if he did visit Bhopal he would be able to settle the matter.

Seeing no hope of inducing the Residency at Indore or Agent at Bhopal to intervene, the Begum decided to approach the Governor General again.

No doubt the leading men of the State made a mistake when after the death of Nawab Nazar Mahommed they effected the arrangement by which the future husband of Sikandar Begum was to be ruler of Bhopal. They, however,

were actuated by honest motives and in their view they acted for the benefit of the State, and it was a mistake which even loyal, farsighted, and faithful men were likely to make considering the condition of the times. The Nawab felt obliged to press for his rights and in this he had the support of Mr. Wilkinson. The Begum, therefore, in addressing the Governor General pointed out that in her opinion, Mr. Wilkinson had exceeded his powers in the measures taken to support the Nawab, and she detailed the circumstances at length. The gist of her letter was that the British Government was desirous of preventing rebellions in the tributary States and appointed Residents for that purpose. In this State the policy was not followed, as plots against the lives both of the rulers and ruled were permitted, and the Political Agent had summoned Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan to Sehore on the plea of superintending his education, and that while there the Nawab was encouraged to cause trouble. Further that, although the appointment of a Political Agent was for the purpose of suppressing trouble he had failed to control mischief makers. Further he had not dispersed a rebellious gathering which had collected at Sehore, and that two of the Nawab's servants, Mustajab Khan and Sume

THE NEW MOSQUE, BHOPAL.

Singh, had openly consulted the Political Agent on the question of importing a body of men from Sironj who were ready to kill both the Begums and their friends, and although he was aware of the conspiracy he took no measures to suppress it and did not inform Qudsia Begum of it's existence.

She also stated that a man named Kan Singh, who had been banished from Bhopal, had been permitted by the Political Agent to reside in Sehore Cantonment, and that this man was constantly intriguing to raise a rebellion against her. Further that he had appointed one of his own men as vakil (agent) for the Nawab, and that this man was a troublesome intriguer who fomented trouble, and lastly she complained that one Shaker Ali, who had been appointed news writer to the Agent in Bhopal, was inimical to her and made false reports. The Begum urged that all these actions showed that the Political Agent was unfavourable to her, although she had given him no cause for complaint, and in fact she had always been ready to act according to his wishes, but when he took no steps to punish rebellious and seditious persons the affairs of the State were likely to go from bad to worse. She therefore requested the Governor General to send some officers to enquire into the Nawab's

conduct, and to safisfy themselves as to her administration of the State during the past seventeen years. She was ready to abide by the ruling of Government after they had considered the rights of her late husband, Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan.

Meanwhile the Nawab's father, Amir Mahommed Khan, his brother Munir Mahommed Khan, and *Asad Ali were working in his interest at Sehore, and had collected several hundred mounted and foot soldiers, and word was sent to the Nawab in Bhopal to come to Sehore. He started in disguise on foot and met the messengers at the tomb of Moulvi Ziauuddin (a short distance outside Bhopal) and mounting his horse rode in to Sehore, arriving there about midnight. On the Political Agent being informed a salute of eleven guns was fired, and next day he addressed a letter to Qudsia Begum.

In this letter he informed her that he had forwarded her letter to the Resident at Indore requesting him and the Political Agent to come to Bhopal. He had given his opinion before and he again repeated it, that the quarrel between her and the Nawab could be settled by themselves. He had instructed the Nawab to be patient and to allow the Begum to carry out the administration

*Asad Ali was Chief of a small State called Basoda.

for a few days longer, and he asked her to send her trustworthy agent, Raja Khushwakht Rai, to arrange matters.

Meanwhile the Nawab began to collect an army at Sehore, and borrowed money from the bankers there, and the Begum complained to the Political Agent. He wrote to her saying that he was aware that she had been told that Sadullah Khan and other rebellious persons had gathered in Sehore with the knowledge and countenance of the Political Agent, but he trusted that she would disregard all such untrue reports. He had spoken to the Nawab in the matter and he had denied that the people had come at his request, but this no doubt was inaccurate, and he had impressed on the Nawab that he would obtain his rights if he exercised patience, as the Begum had pledged her word to the Government that she would grant them. Further he informed the Begum that the Nawab seemed inclined to disperse the gathering, and that if she would send Raja Khushwakht Rai to reason with him and reassure him he felt sure that the Nawab would not only get rid of his following, but would return to Bhopal and make his peace with her. He urged the Begum not to delay in sending the Raja as the numbers of the Nawab's adherents were increasing daily, and it would be difficult

to get rid of them without fighting unless immediate action were taken. He was of opinion that it would be necessary for the State to pay the members of the gathering a certain amount to cover their expenses in returning to their homes, and as he had the true interests of the State at heart he urged her to take early action on the lines he suggested.

Mr. Wilkinson then told the Nawab that he could not be permitted to collect armed forces in Sehore, and that if he continued to do so he must leave the Cantonment. The Nawab's reply to this was to attack and capture Doraha, Devipura and Jharkhera (places within a radius of about fifteen miles from Sehore). Mr. Wilkinson again pressed the Nawab to dismiss his forces, and wrote to Qudsia Begum upbraiding her with her failure to fulfil her promise to hand over the government of the state to the Nawab.

He also wrote to Raja Khushwakht Rai and suggested that he should visit Sehore and take steps to arrange matters with the Nawab, and pointed out that as the Raja was the leading official in the State the discredit of any bloodshed which might ensue would attach to him if he did not do his utmost in preventing the parties from coming to blows. Mr. Wilkinson pointed out that he was precluded from active inter-

ference by the orders and policy of the Supreme Government, but that if the Begum resigned her powers and applied for the grant of a jagir for her maintenance, and for a promise of protection to her life and fair and respectful treatment, she should send a petition to this effect, and the Government would be prepared to guarantee this to her. He added that neither the Raja nor any one else could command victory, and that the issue of the struggle was in God's hands. Personally he had left no stone unturned to compose the dispute, he had written strongly to Asad Ali Khan ; and he ended by saying that if the Raja thought that there was no other way out of the difficulty he was prepared to ask the Supreme Government to admonish both parties.

Although the Qudsia Begum had sufficient military forces to crush the disturbers of the peace yet she was desirous if possible to effect her object without bloodshed, and both she and Raja Khushwakht Rai accepted the advice of the Political Agent and negotiations with the Nawab were opened. The Begum deputed Raja Khushwakht Rai and Hakim Ghulam Hussain to represent her, and the Nawab chose Asad Ali Khan and Mir Wasil Ali. The Begum's representatives urged that the powers of State should be handed over to the Nawab after a period of ten

years, while the Nawab's party pressed that the period should be three years. A deadlock ensued and the Begum wrote asking the Resident at Indore to come down and settle it. Her letter repeated what she had said on former occasions, and stated that in spite of the negotiations inaugurated by Mr. Wilkinson the Nawab was still bent on causing trouble, and she trusted that the Resident would come and see for himself which side was to blame, as she trusted him as an impartial judge.

The Resident replied that he regretted his inability to come as he had reported the affairs in detail to the Imperial Government and awaited their directions. Shortly after, a reply to Qudsia Begum's letter to the Governor General asking for his intervention was received, and after an expression of sorrow at the state of affairs, the Governor General wrote that it was an old established custom for the British Government to abstain from interference in such matters, either directly or through its agents, and hence so far no action had been taken. If, however, matters continued in their present state the Government would be constrained to interfere, and he warned the Begum that such action could not be favourable to her as that would mean the extinction of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan's

just rights. The Begum had undertaken and executed a bond to surrender the rule of the State to the Nawab on his attaining the age of nineteen, and it was hardly necessary for him to say that the breaking of such a promise was a crime against the Government, religion, and the public at large. He added that although he desired to abstain from active interference, still it was the opinion of the Company's Government that the Nawab was the rightful heir to the gadi and that it became her to surrender the rule of the State to him. If she did so, it was probable that the Nawab would be glad to provide for her liberally, and he trusted that she would accept the advice of the Government and act accordingly.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Battle of Ashta. Sikandar joins her husband there. Intervention by the Government.

While this correspondence was going on the Nawab succeeded in winning over some of the important land owners, Jagirdars and Priests, and he sent Asad Ali Khan with a force to take (1) Bari, (2) Jaithari and (3) Chowkigarh, and he entered the fort of (4) Ashta without resistance, as the Killedar (Captain of the Fort) Shahamat Khan went over to his party, although he had

(1). Bari. This is the headquarter of Tehsil in the Southern District, and is situated on river Marna, 25 miles from the railway station, Semri.

(2). Jaithari. This is the headquarters of a Tehsil in the Eastern District, and is 20 miles from the railway station, Gaderwara.

(3). Chowkigarh. The fort at Chowkigarh is situated on the summit of a mountain in the Northern District, and is 50 miles from Bhopal.

(4). Ashta. This town is 47 miles west from Bhopal, and is situated on the river Parbati. Dost Mahommed Khan had built a fort here in 1715 A.D. It is the headquarters of the Western District.

(5). Doraha. This is a village 14 miles north-west of Bhopal.

previously sworn allegiance to the Begum and had received a robe of honour from her.

Another incident occurred just then which greatly incensed the Begum and increased her anger against the Nawab. This was the flogging of one of her messengers by order of the Nawab. Her reply to this insult was to send a large force to beseige Asad Ali Khan at that time in the Fort of Basoda. Now Basoda is outside the limits of the Bhopal State, and the Political Agent objected to the Begum carrying on military operations outside her own territory, but her argument was that Asad Ali Khan had employed foreigners to attack her and she was justified in attacking him. The Political Agent, however, objected to this, saying that she also was employing men in her army who were not residents of her State, and that he had been instructed by the Government to make no difference between the two parties. She therefore withdrew her force and despatched another under Raja Khushwakht Rai to attack the Nawab at Ashta.

On the same day a man carrying a number of letters from the Nawab to leading persons in the State was captured by the Begum's adherents, and the letters were forwarded to her. Some of these no doubt were letters from the Nawab to genuine sympathisers, while others appeared

to have been written with a view to compromise the recipients. The Begum was greatly enraged and was about to punish the persons addressed, when Raja Khushwakht Rai represented that this was no time for anger and that friends and foes would be easily recognised when the operations commenced. The Begum accepted his advice and it is stated was anxious to proceed with her force to Ashta and take command of it. The Raja, however, with difficulty dissuaded her from this course, and himself set off in command of 4000 horse and foot and four guns, and encamped at the village of Maghli (a few miles from Ashta) on June the 22nd, 1837. The Nawab accompanied by his father assembled his force, and before hostilities commenced sent a messenger to Raja Khushwakht Rai asking him to encamp farther off at a village called Kotri, and possibly an arrangement could be come to without bloodshed. The Raja replied that he was acting under the orders of the Begum and could not go back, and he suggested that the Nawab should retire to Ashta. Meanwhile some arrows were fired by the Nawab's men and fighting commenced.

At first fortune favoured the Nawab—Bakshi Iradat Khan one of the Begum's leaders was slightly wounded by Nana Kan Singh the com-

Dulhan Saheba, wife of Hakim Shahzad Maseh
Madame Bourbon

[*Face page* 82

mander of the Nawab's Sikhs. The latter, however, was surrounded by the Begum's troops and killed, his head being cut off by a sword cut. Next, Sadulla Khan with the Nawab's men attacked and nearly captured the Bhopal guns, but was eventually driven back and wounded by the Bakshigirrhi Regiment and some Afghans, and the Nawab's force lost heart and retired in confusion on Ashta Fort after the loss of 250 men killed. The Nawab followed and entered the fort. The Begum's force remained on the ground, and Raja Khushwakht Rai gave orders for the burial of the dead and treatment of the wounded.

Nana Kan Singh's head was despatched to the Begum who directed that it should be hung on the Futtehgarh Fort. This, however, was not done as some of her courtiers said that Kan Singh had reaped the reward of rebellion, and eventually the head was delivered to his son for decent internment.

A day later the Raja invested the Fort and contented himself for the following few days in firing a few shells in to the Fort daily. The Nawab owing to the death of Kan Singh and wounding of Sadulla Khan had become disheartened and wrote to the Political Agent imploring his assistance.

Meanwhile the Begum sent a force to capture Bari and Jaithari which Asad Ali Khan had occupied, and he on hearing that the Nawab was surrounded at Ashta evacuated them and fled to Basoda. On hearing this the Nawab sent word to Asad Ali Khan to go to the Political Agent and ask for his assistance in the righteous cause. The Begum then gained possession of Garrhi, Doraha, Devipura, Jharkhera and Sehore, after some fighting with the Nawab's troops near *Nazarganj.

Seven days after the commencement of hostilities at Ashta fighting was resumed there, but before any result was obtained by either party the Governor General intervened and directed Mr. Wilkinson to put a stop to the fighting. He obliged Raja Khushwakht Rai to withdraw his forces from Ashta, and he summoned the Nawab and his followers to Sehore and appointed a Governor of the Ashta Fort. He also called up the Company's 68th Regiment and stationed it at Gunga.

The writer was told by Dulhan Saheba, the wife of Hakim Shahzad Maseh, that when Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan was surrounded in Ashta Fort after the first engagement the Political Agent told Qudsia Begum that although her

*A market place, founded by Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan.

forces had been victorious, the quarrel was between members of the same family, and the Government highly disapproved of it, and that as she was the senior and the Nawab was ashamed and anxious for a reconciliation, it would be becoming and advisable if she held out the olive branch to him. He suggested that either Qudsia Begum should go herself to Ashta or send her daughter Sikandar Begum to bring her husband back to Bhopal.

Qudsia Begum agreed to this and despatched Sikandar Begum together with Dulhan Saheba and some nobles, and they were received into the Fort by the Nawab. The party remained there for twenty-four hours and then returned with the Nawab to Bhopal.

After this Qudsia Begum was clearly informed by the Governor General in a letter dated the 27th October, 1837, that she must dismiss the foreigners enrolled in her army; it was pointed out that she had disobeyed the clear orders of Government and had disregarded its advice. The letter reminded her of her promise to hand over the control of the State to the Nawab, and said that this must now be done even though the transfer of authority might lead to harm. The Governor General further stated that if Qudsia Begum was not satisfied with the Nawab's bond

to arrange for her maintenance and security without the guarantee of the British Government this would be granted, as the comfort and welfare of the Begum was desired by Government.

In forwarding this letter to the Begum the Political Agent informed her that she would have to defray the expenses of the Company's regiment at Gunga till she complied with the wishes of the Governor General.

This was a critical time for Qudsia Begum. She was aware that her forces had defeated the Nawab, she knew that the people of Bhopal and the army were in her favour, and under the treaty Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan and the East India Company, her daughter was the rightful heir to the throne, further she considered that she had acted in accordance with all treaties and bonds, yet she was mindful of the failure of (1) Beja Bai Saheba in a neighbouring State when she had acted somewhat similarly against her adopted son some three or four years previously, and she reflected that (2) Badshah Begum had failed when she opposed Mr. Low, the Resident at Lucknow, only two or three months before, and she feared that the result would be the same in her case. She also was proud of the distinction that Bhopal was the only State which

had never raised its sword against the British.

(1). Beja Bai was a brave and accomplished Rani of Gwalior. No male heir had been born to her or to her husband's other wives, and the Maharja had died without adopting an heir. She therefore adopted Jankoji Rao Scindia, and the ceremony was celebrated with great splendour in June, 1827, A.D.

Maharaja Jankoji Rao, being only twelve years of age at the time, the Rani carried out the administration of the State with the help and advice of her brother, Hindoo Rao.

The Rani, though somewhat severe, was wise and intelligent and ruled the State well and desired to keep the reins of authority in her hands during her life. To effect this she attempted to form a treaty with the British Government conferring all power on herself, and declared that this was in accordance with the wishes of her late husband.

The British Government, however, would not agree, and stated that all orders of the State must bear the Maharaja's seal.

The illfeeling between Beja Bai and the Maharaja increased daily, till one day in October, 1832, A.D., the Maharaja left his palace and went to the Resident. He admonished both parties and a temporary peace was patched up, which, however, did not last long. In December, 1832, Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General, visited Gwalior, and both sides endeavoured to gain his favour. He, however, told them both plainly that Gwalior being an independant State he could not interfere in their private quarrels, and matters remained as before.

Seven months later, another dispute arose between Beja Bai and the Maharaja, and as the greater part of the army supported the Maharaja, Beja Rai was obliged to leave Gwalior under the advice of the Resident, and after a few days at Dholepore she took up her residence in Agra.

(2). Badshah Begum was the wife of Nasir-uddin Haidar, ruler of Lucknow. He died suddenly in June, 1837. His heir was an uncle named Mahommed Ali Shah, but he was opposed by Badshah Begum, who attempted to secure the succession for one Muna Jan, an illegitimate son of Nasir-uddin Haidar.

To prevent this, Mr. Low, the Resident, with a force of troops

took Mahommed Ali Shah to the Palace in the middle of the night and interviewed Badshah Begum. It appears that some rejoicings were going on when some one insulted Mr. Low, and he promptly ordered the Begum and her followers to leave the palace within fifteen minutes. As they failed to do so, the palace was bombarded and the Begum with her followers fled.

The following day Mahommed Ali Shah was put on the throne, and Badshah Begum and Muuna Jan were arrested and deported to Benares.

Qudsia Begum therefore decided to withdraw her claims and expressed herself willing to hand over the State on being given a Jagir for her maintenance. The Political Agent signed a bond guaranteeing this and agreements were signed both by Qudsia Begum and Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan and sent to the Governor General for ratification.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Agreements after Qudsia Begum's Abdication.

The first was in the vernacular and it's gist was as follows:

"A letter dated, October 2nd, 1837, has been received from Mr. McNaughten, Secretary to the Government of India, regarding the dissension between the Nawab Qudsia Begum and Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan, and pointing out that it was advisable that the Begum should dismiss those persons who had recently been appointed to her service, and that she should entrust the full powers of the State to the Nawab.

"On her doing this the Hon'ble the East India Company would be responsible for her life and honour and would guarantee the continuance to her of her Jagir. This letter was communicated to the Begum, and she has expressed her acceptance of the directions of the Government. She has discharged many new employees and when she has made over the administration of the State with full powers to the Nawab the following few words are written for her comfort.

" Firstly—that the Jagir of the Begum with customs rights will remain in her possession as before.

" The Fort and lands of Islamnagar which had been part of her Jagir, with the income thereof amounting to some seventeen or eighteen thousand rupees per annum, will remain in her possession according to her request.

" The district of Bari, with the town of that name, whose net revenue is about Rs : 60,000 per annum will be added to her jagir, with the proviso that a sum of Rs : 20,000 formerly allotted for the expenses of religious devotees and travellers will be resumed by the State.

" The Palace in which she resides, the well of Baghpur, the shops of the mosque and other buildings in Nazargange will remain her property.

" It is stipulated that the Qudsia Begum will not interfere in matters of State whatever action the Nawab may take, and will not conspire against the Nawab's life or the safety of the State. It is further stipulated that the Nawab will not interfere in any way with the above jagirs during the life of the Begum, nor will allow anyone to conspire against the life of the Begum or to interfere in the management of her property or affairs. The British Government hereby guarantees the fulfilment of the

above conditions, and will call to account any party who acts against them.

"Secondly—the Nawab Sikandar Begum realizing that it is to her interest, welfare and happiness to act in obedience to the wishes of her husband, as is the duty of all wives, will proceed to his Palace, and the Nawab with a clean heart and true love will treat her with devotion. Neither of them should harbour any evil intention against the other.

"Thirdly—The Nawab Moiz Mahommed Khan and Mian Faujdar Mahommed Khan will not interfere in the administration of the State, or act contrary to the orders of the Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan, who will treat them with consideration and dignity.

"As the orders of the Government only concern the affairs of the Qudsia Begum, and have nothing to do with other matters of the State, the above document will be atrested by the British Government."

Note by Political Agent.—I shall go to Agra after the settlement of the dispute and present myself before His Excellency the Governor General The deputies of both parties will accompany me, and I will request His Excellency to sign and attest the documents. They will present an application to the Governor-General for sanction to the proposal that the Nawab will in future live in peace with the Begum, who is his mother, and will treat her with the respect and consideration due to her. The Begum on her part will treat the Nawab as her son, will bestow on him

her motherly affection, and will encourage him in the performance of good deeds which will bring prosperity and welfare to the State, and be the cause of happiness and benefit to the Nawab and to her name.

The agreement entered into by the Qudsia Begum and submitted for attestation by the Governor General in Council is as follows —

Whereas the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in council, upon learning the existence of the dissensions which had arisen between me and my beloved son the Nawab Nazir-ud-Daulah Jahangir Mahommed Khan addressed his orders through Mr. Secretary MacNaughtan to Mr. Lancelot Wilkinson, Agent at Bhopal, in regard to the bestowal by His Lordship of the guarantee of the Government of India for the security of my life and of my private Jagir on my consigning the reins of Government of Bhopal State to the Nawab and Whereas the Agent duly communicated the above in a Kharita to my address ; and Whereas it was ever my heartfelt aim to obey the orders of the British Government in every respect, I have therefore consigned the whole management of the affairs of the Bhopal State into the hands of my son the Nawab. My original Jagir including the Sayar duties attached thereto and the fort and land of Islamnagar which are estimated to yield

about Rs : 17,000 or Rs : 18,000 per annum will remain in my possession. The lands of the Bari Pargana now remaining Khalsa yielding about Rs : 60,000 per annum together with the Cusba town of Baree, have been allotted to me in addition as a new Jagir. The garden and sacred tomb (of my late husband), with the lands originally attached to them for their due maintenance, yielding about Rs : 33,000 per annum, together with my present residence, the Baoli Bagh, the Nazzarganj, dookhans, my mosque, etc., and the Poora called by my name will also continue in my possession. The Nawab is to refrain from interfering in any way with my possession and control of this Jagir, and from seeking to do injury to my life in any way. I in like manner engage to refrain from all interference with the affairs of the State and the direction thereof by the Nawab and from seeking to do any injury to his life, the Government of India holding either party responsible for any breach of these engagements. It is requested that the signature of His Lordship be attached to the deeds of Agreements of both parties in ratification thereof, that they may prove, if required, a full assurance on any future occasion. I will show every con-

sideration and the most cordial affection to the Nawab due to him as my son.

Sd. By the BEGUM KUDSIA'S MARK.

Agreement of the Nawab Nuzzur-ud-dowlah the Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan, Nawab of Bhopal, submitted for the ratification of the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council.

Whereas the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council, upon learning the existence of the dissensions which had arisen between me and the Begum Qudsia, my respected mother, addressed orders to the effect that on the Begum's consigning the entire management of the affairs of the State into my hands, His Lordship would grant the guarantee of the British Government for the security of the Begum's life, and whereas the Begum signified her acquiescence in these orders in a Kharita addressed to Mr. Lancelot Wilkinson, Political Agent at Bhopal, and as the Agent desired that a suitable provision be made by way of Jagir for the Begum, and whereas the Begum has consigned into my hands the sole management of the affairs of the State, I therefore, have, with a view of pro-

moting the comfort of the Begum, according to the advice of the above mentioned gentleman, agreed to grant the Jagirs, etc., as beneath fixed, and I engage that the Begum's original Jagir, including the Sayar duties attached thereto and the fort and lands of Islamnagar yielding about Rs: 17,000 or Rs: 18,000 per annum, remain as heretofore in Her Highness's possession. The lands of the Baree Pargana which are now Khalsa, together with the Cusba of Baree are allotted to Her Highness in addition to her old Jagir. The garden and the tomb (of the late Nawab), with the lands originally attached to them yielding about Rs: 33,000 per annum, will remain in her management and possession as also the palace in which Her Highness dwells, the Baoli Bagh, the Begum's poora, the Nuzzurganj shops and her mosque, etc. The Begum is to refrain from interfering in any way with my management of the affairs of the State and from seeking to do injury to my life in any way, and I will refrain from molesting in any way the Begum in the enjoyment of the above mentioned Jagirs, etc., during the period of her life, and will not seek to do any injury to her life in any way. The Government of India will hold either of the contracting parties

transgressing these agreements in any respect responsible. It is hoped that His Lordship will be pleased to attach his signature to this agreement in ratification thereof, that it may prove on any future occasion if necessary a full assurance. I shall ever seek with heart and soul to preserve the filial respect due to the Begum as my mother.

Dated 29th Shaban of the year 1253 Hejira corresponding with 29th November, 1837.

Sd. By the NAWAB JAHANGIR MAHOMMED KHAN.

These engagements were ratified by the Governor General on 15th January, 1838.

Bhopal City.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

REFLECTIONS OF THE AUTHOR. QUEEN VICTORIA. SOME EASTERN QUEENS. THE ADVANTAGES OF WOMEN RULERS.

FROM a careful consideration of the above events it is reasonable to suppose that owing to the recent establishment of the Government of the East India Company peace and tranquility had not been fully obtained throughout the country, and the Company was therefore averse to seeing the administration of a State, where disorders were to be expected, in the hands of a woman. Besides this there was the agreement signed by Qudsia Begum before the leading men of the State to the effect that the State would be entrusted to the Nawab or whoever among the relatives became the husband of Qudsia Begum's daughter. Whether the prevalent idea in India at the time regarding the fitness of women to rule was responsible for that agreement, or whether it was due to an error of judgment of the leading men is difficult to say. Although the young Begum Sikandar was able and quali-

fied to rule and the claim of the Nawab to the State under the agreement might have been disregarded, it was considered politically expedient at the time that the reins of Government should be in the hands of a man, and seeing that there was no likelihood of peace and tranquility in the State it would no doubt have been dangerous to appoint a woman to guide its destinies.

Even in Europe there has been a prejudice against women as Rulers so it is not to be wondered at that a similar prejudice existed in India. The throne of Hanover, formerly united to that of Great Britain was separated from it at the accession of Queen Victoria, as the Salic Law exists in Hanover.

The writer feels sure that Mr. Wilkinson shared the prejudice, as he once declared to Qudsia Begum that history did not support the contention that women could be satisfactory rulers. When reminded by Qudsia Begum that a great lady had just ascended the throne of England he gave the astonishing reply that female rule was not allowed in Islam. His argument being that Fatima did not succeed to the Caliphate on the death of the Prophet (may peace and God's blessing be upon him).

No doubt history has mostly been silent about

Eastern women rulers, and no clear account of them has so far been written, probably from the same reasons as in England, namely, that their rule was not generally approved. It was thought that women have very little political and administrative capacity and that if they did possess it they were incapable of using it. That their physical weakness and merciful natures prevented them from fulfilling the duties of a Ruler satisfactorily. There are, however, many examples both in the world and in history of splendid Queens, e.g. :

Queen Mary,
Queen Elizabeth,
Queen Mary II,
Queen Anne, and others.

To English readers it is unecessary to describe the histories of these English Queens, but there have also been celebrated Mahommedan Queens though less well known to the world in general. For instance Shujarat-ud-dar the last ruling Queen of the Aiyubiya dynasty in Egypt which was founded by Sultan Salah-ud-deen a hero of the 6th century of the Hejira. The chief result of her reign was the peace which existed after the series of wars during the preceding reigns of that dynasty. When she ascended the throne the Aiyubiya dynasty was decaying and

she was obliged to call in the help of other nations, but it was due to her that Egypt remained with an independent government till it was shattered by the Sultan Salim.

Then there was Razia Sultanah, daughter of Sultan Altamish, the only woman who ever occupied the throne of Delhi. Generally when there is no male heir to a ruling family a daughter succeeds, but Razia Sultanah had a brother, and she is the only instance in the history of Islam in which a woman succeeded in preference to a male heir. She was brave and courageous and had commanded the army with great courage in many battles. Ibn-i-Batata, the famous traveller and writer, who visited India in Mahommed Taghlaq's reign, writes: "Razia comes out on horseback dressed as a soldier, she constantly takes the field herself to suppress the insurrections of rebellious officers. She carries out the administration of the country so well that even a statesmanlike ruler like Sultan Altamsh preferred the daughter to his sons."

Next comes Ummul Majd of the Vilam dynasty. She was a contemporary of the Sultan Mahmud, who endeavoured to conquer her country, but was frustrated by the clever plans of the lady, and it was not till after her death that Sultan Mahmud succeeded in over running the country.

Then we have Chand Sultanah of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar. The extensive Bahmini Kingdom of the Deccan was split up into five parts after the decay of that dynasty. The most important of these were the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar and the Adilshahi of Bijapur. Chand Sultanah ruled the former and was daughter-in-law of Adil Shah of Bijapur. During her reign Akbar sent a large army of Rajpoots under Jahangir to conquer the Deccan, and although it made repeated attempts to take Ahmadnagar, they were always defeated by Chand Sultanah, till eventually she became exhausted and a peace was made in which the province of Berar was annexed to the Moghal Kingdom.

Lastly there is Eshkhatoon of the Atabag dynasty of Shiraz in Persia. After the fall of the Seljuks, Persia was divided up into principalities and Shiraz came under the rule of Saad Zangi, who was the Patron of the poet Saadi who was called after him. Eshkhatoon belonged to this family and was the wife of Munko Tamir son of Huluku Khan. She ruled Shiraz in troublous times and her memory is still preserved in the literary institution of Shiraz known as Tanaab Bafaun. She died near Tabriz in the year 686 of the Hajira.

In the second part of this book my readers will see that the Begum Qudsia's rule was a blessing in comparison with that of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed. Events obliged even Mr. Wilkinson to admit that the people of the State lived in peace and comfort in the time of Qudsia Begum.

During our own times our beloved Queen Victoria and the Nawab Sikandar Begum, a greatly respected lady in India and in the Islamic world, have proved that the female sex may have administrative qualities, and that such women are born both in Europe and Asia possessed both of enlightenment, tact, and the many other qualities inherent in a good ruler. The history of Queen Victoria has been the theme of many writers and excites wonder and admiration in every one. Although a biography of the Begum Sikandar has not yet been written, she has been mentioned many times in the histories of India, and one of her descendants Nawabzada Hafiz General Obaidulla Khan is at present engaged in writing her life.

The writer, from a study of the histories of the world and from her knowledge of her own dynasty, has come to the conclusion that administrative capacity is more inherent in women than in men, and that nature specially intended them for rulers.

Men are given bodily strength to earn their living and to enable them to fight in battles. Women have been granted the qualities of mercy, sympathy, toleration, fidelity and firmness. These render them specially suitable as rulers of kingdoms though no doubt educaton and careful upbringing are necessary for both sexes. Given these, women are superior to men.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

Qudsia Begum abandons the veil. The administration of the State. The Bhopal Contingent.

From her infancy Qudsia Begum had been in Purdah and up to and after her marriage she observed the rules of Purdah very strictly. Hakim Shazad Masih and Mian Karam Mahommed Khan were her chief advisers. They were both advanced in years and although the former was of another faith (he was a Bourbon) his valuable services to Nawabs Wazir Mahommed Khan and Nazar Mahommed Khan made him the most distinguished among the officials of the State. Mian Karam Mahommed Khan had also rendered faithful service, and Qudsia's administration was carried on under their advice. Each held the post of Minister successively, and the Begum held their advice in such regard that she would not visit the house of a relative without their permission. She even went so far as to consult them before going for a walk in her garden which she was fond of doing.

They in turn treated her advice with great reverence and regard, and never acted without consulting her. Fifteen years passed in this manner till their death, when the Begum selected Faujdar Mahommed Khan as her Minister and he was succeeded by Raja Khushwakht Rai, a Hindoo. It was in his time that the Begum decided to discard the veil, not because she did not trust him, but because she had come to the conclusion that ruling from behind the Purdah was like working in the dark, besides which there were plots against her life.

She was now thirty-four years old and she first consulted her brothers Mian Moiz Mahommed Khan and Mian Faujdar Mahommed Khan and asked them whether they had prejudices against her relinquishing the Purdah like the ignorant people. Both brothers agreed with her view and quoted cases among ancient ruling families of women who had not only ruled but had held Darbars. They promised to support her if Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan and his father and brother raised difficulties, and after consulting the officers of State she gradually forsook the Purdah.

She began by summoning the old retainers who had been in service since Wazir Mahommed Khan's time and sent orders through them to

the officers of State, then she allowed the officers of her household to come into her presence and gave them their orders; after that she sent for Fatehjang Khan the Commander of the Fort and took lessons in riding from him with her grooms in attendance. Later on she summoned her Minister and he presented his homage to her and subsequently all her officers appeared before her and within twenty days she had issued orders that any of her subjects who wished to present a petition to her should be admitted.

Her idea evidently was that it was difficult to rule from behind the Purdah, particularly when the recognised rules of Purdah exceeded the directions laid down by her religion.

She also compelled her daughter Sikandar to abandon Purdah as she was under the firm conviction that she would rule the State one day.

Before the time of Nawab Nazar Mahommed Khan, owing to constant wars disorders and mismanagement, the whole receipts of Bhopal did not exceed one lakh and a quarter of rupees. During his reign by the grace of God the State of the country improved, and the East India Company granted the Nawab five districts and the Fort of Islamnagar in return for the assistance rendered by him to General Adams, and the State came under the protection of the British

Government with a treaty of alliance and friendship. Peace was restored throughout the country and the method of collecting revenue and the general administration was revised. The progress was so marked that the revenue rose to ten lakhs of rupees during the four years of his reign. Details of the methods of the government of the country during Nazar Mahommed's reign are not forthcoming, and even during Qudsia Begum's rule it is not possible to state exactly. Only this can be said for certain, her orders were practically all oral ones ; the people were simple and there was an absence of cunning and craft among them and this system appears to have worked well. Sikandar Begum has given an account of the administration in her time when her husband was in power with Faujdar Mahommed Khan as Minister. A civil war had been going on for many years and the times were barbarous. Civilization and enlightenment were unknown and there was no distinction between the civil and criminal courts. The account shows that in some divisions there was a civil official called a Tehsildar whose duty it was to collect the revenue and deal with civil dis-

Note by Translator —The present revenue of Bhopal, including a district granted to Sikandar Begum for her loyalty in the Mutiny, is about 60 lakhs. A lakh = £6,666

putes and a Thannadar who looked after crime. In some divisions, however, there was only a Thannadar who did everything. There was must confusion over revenue matters and no regular offices were maintained. It appears, however, that disorders did not occur and the State was not in financial difficulty during the nineteen years of Qudsia Begum's reign.

Afterwards when general disorders broke out during the time of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan, Mr. Wilkinson, who had been chiefly instrumental in effecting the transfer of power from the Begum to the Nawab, paid a tribute to the peace and good order which had prevailed during the Begum's time.

In a letter to Nawab Asad Ali Khan, then Minister, cautioning him to pay greater attention to the disturbed state of the country he wrote as follows :—

"The public of Bhopal are openly declaring that they lived in peace and comfort under the protection of Qudsia Begum and that there was neither fear nor danger during her wise reign. She gave Jagirs and generous rewards to those who served her faithfully, she made good arrangements for the supply of food and warlike stores for the army, and spent money on the treatment of wounded soldiers and gave sums of money to the heirs of those who were killed."

The Sikandar Begum wrote very strongly about the efficient rule of her mother in a despatch to the Company regarding the proposed guarantee of Qudsia Begum's Jagir, her words were as follows: "It is well known to the English Officers that she administered justice, acted with clemency to her subjects, and did her utmost for the prosperity of the State both by maintaining peace and order and by keeping the army well supplied."

It is not known what the exact number of the army was. It is, however, on record that Raja Khushwakht Rai commanded a force of 4000 horse and foot at the battle of Ashta. Possibly some of these were men enlisted specially at the time, but funds were found to pay them. Besides this, under article six of the treaty with the East India Company, the Bhopal State kept up 600 horse and 400 foot to assist the Company's Government when necessary.

Article six of the treaty runs as follows:—"The State of Bhopal shall furnish a contingent of 600 horse and 400 infantry for the service of the British Government. Whenever required and whenever necessary, the whole of the Bhopal forces shall join the British Army, excepting such portion as may be necessary for the internal administration of the country."

This force was stationed at Sehore Cantonment under the orders of the Political Agent and was paid by the State. During Qudsia Begum's time the annual cost of its upkeep was fixed at Rs: 1,30,000.

Note.—Subsequently the force became the Bhopal contingent under British officers, and later, in Lord Kitchener's time, it became a regular regiment of the Indian Army under the name of the IX. Bhopal Infantry, and gained great distinction by its gallant conduct in France, in 1915. After losing eighteen British officers and the greater part of its effectives, the regiment was sent to Mesopotamia, where it is now (1916) serving.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THE BHOPAL ARMY IN QUDSIA BEGUM'S DAY.

As regards the army of Qudsia Begum's day, it can be said that it was sufficient for the necessities of the time. It was enlisted from the various divisions of the State; there is no information as to its dress and quarters beyond that most of the men lived in the forts in Bhopal, and a rather interesting account of it is given in the report of an official describing the meeting of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan and Lord William Bentinck at Saugor. It ran as follows:

"Saiyid Anwar Ali was the commander of the advance guard of cavalry with the drums and standard, then followed the artillery, the Afghan flag bearers, the infantry, the sepoys in black uniform, the Arab soldiers with the Futteh Nishan (flag of victory), then the Mahi Muratib (the insignia of the order of the Fish presented to a former Nawab of the Bhopal by the Nizam of Hyderabad), then Mahommed Khan's horsemen and bodyguard troopers followed by gaily caparisoned horses, palanquins, drums, men bearing trays of food, standard and mace bearers. After all this came the elephant carrying Nawab

Jahangir Mahommed Khan, surrounded by 50 other elephants, on some of which were English officers. Then came the regiment of Nana Kan Singh, the horsemen of the household, horsemen clad in coats of mail and Mian Karam Mahommed Khan was riding with the procession of Seth Moolchand's soldiers both horse and foot, men from Mewar and runners. Last of all came the Jagirdars (landed gentry) of the State.

The bright howdahs and Aftabis (drinking vessels) were shining in the sunlight and truly it was a wonderful sight. Every one praised the army."

Bakshi Mahommed Khan commanded the Qudsia Begum's forces, he was a tactful commander, and a brave and loyal soldier. Qudsia Begum was famed for her charity and liberality. All relatives of the reigning family were assisted by grants of money and in spite of this there is no evidence to show that the Begum had to borrow money or contracted any debts. Afterwards Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan and his minister Faujdar Mahommed Khan laid a great burden of debt on the State, although he was not confronted with such strenuous times as the Begum. Mention has already been made of the unmethodical method in which the districts were managed, there was, however, a head

Bhopal City from Upper Lake.

Daftar (office). The contracts for the collection of the revenue were given in a formal manner, and in the case of the grant of Jagirs and Mafis (revenue free grants of land) regular documents were engrossed. A store of corn was kept in every fort, and the farmers and tenants received advances of seed grain when they required it.

From all that has been written above there can be no doubt that Qudsia Begum carried on the administration of the State for nineteen years to the benefit of her subjects and the State, and had she been favoured with more peaceful times her good qualities would have been more evident.

After the death of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan she wrote to the Governor General that when her daughter Sikandar Begum was only one-and-a-half years old, her Father's heritage had been bestowed on her, and that during her minority she (Qudsia) had carried out the duties of the State opposed by no one. Now that Jahangir Mahommed had died, Sikandar Begum who had been carefully educated and trained by her and was possessed of wisdom and sagacity should succeed as ruler of the State.

This letter was not forwarded by the Agency, but shows that Qudsia Begum had trained and educated her daughter.

PART II.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

EVENTS AFTER THE ACCESSION OF NAWAB JAHANGIR MAHOMMED KHAN.

As related in previous chapters the disputes and family strife which had lasted for seventeen years had at last been settled. All the agreements had been ratified by the Governor General, and Nawab Sikandar Begum had been to Ashta and returned with her husband to Bhopal, and they were living together in his palace.

Qudsia Begum's troubles, however, were not at an end, as the Nawab and his supporters were not even now content although he had gained possession of the State.

Sikandar Begum was expecting an heir, and as long as she lived there was no hope of the State going to the family of Amir Mahommed Khan. Several abortive attempts on the lives of the Begums were attempted; Sikandar Begum who had given up Purdah was constrained by her husband to adopt it again, and finally Qudsia

Begum to avoid further troubles left Bhopal and went to live in Islamnagar Fort.

Qudsia Begum now began to be very anxious about the State of the country, and her tender heart was much grieved to see the tyranny and corruption which was rampant everywhere; old and reliable officials were replaced by corrupt and dishonest persons, many of the cultivators left the State owing to oppression, bankers were forced to give up sums of money, women were outraged and murders were thought of slight account. She, however, was helpless, and her heart was sore for the people.

Mr. Wilkinson was aware of the state of things and at last wrote a long letter of warning to the Nawab Asad Ali Khan Minister to Jahangir. It was dated the 19th of December 1841 and the translation of it is as follows:—

After compliments:—

"It is some two weeks or more that news from our city is to the effect that there are many fearless and clever thieves in it. Hafiz the Shirazi has written, no doubt with some exaggeration, that the thieves of Shiraz had become so bold that they bore a light when carrying out their designs at night, but the thieves of Bhopal are even bolder than this; they plunder and loot in broad daylight in

the streets and bazars of the city without fear of interference, and they even lay hands on the females of noble houses besides the women of the city. The people even intend to leave the city and go to some place where they will be safe.

The people of Bhopal say that they lived in peace and comfort under the protection of the Nawab Qudsia Begum who was a widow, but under the present Nawab, who is a man, they live in terror and misery. They further complain against the officers of the Hon'ble East India Company, and declare that they have been entrusted by them to the charge of a tyrant. Many bankers and traders, inhabitants of other cities, but who have branches or shops in Bhopal are in danger of their places being plundered and have complained to me.

My dear friend, last year there *were* abundance of thieves, but this year it is far worse. You and the Nawab know how to deal with them, but have taken no steps to that end. So much so that the city people say that the Nawab wishes to destroy Bhopal in order that the people may go to live in his new city of Jahangirabad, and has encouraged the thieves, and they say that such a state

of affairs could not exist without his connivance.

It is a matter for regret that the bestowal of powers on the Nawab has resulted in the stainless skirt of justice of the British Government being polluted by tyranny and the oppression of the people. They are certainly justified in their complaints. During the reign of Qudsia Begum and her ministers Hakim Shahzad Maseh, Mian Karam Mahommed and Raja Khushwakht Rai, such a number of thieves was never heard of.

Both ancient and present Kings and Rulers have considered the comfort and ease of their subjects who are obedient and have been given into their charge by God as of more importance than their own luxury and pleasures. It is surprising that singing and dancing continue in the palace of the Ruler while his subjects are oppressed and in misery. How can the ruler and his minister expect the blessing of God.

You are aware that the Government is informed of the state of things every week, and the daily thefts and the absence of any attempt to suppress them are reported.

I expect from your friendship that speedy measures will be taken so that the creatures

of God may be relieved of misery worse than a dangerous disease which endangers life only, but these thieves are a curse to life, property and the honour of women. I shall be greatly obliged if you will see that the sighs of the people and their complaints against the officials do not reach heaven."

Qudsia Begum then wrote a long letter to the Governor General stating that she had honestly carried out his instructions and that she and Sikandar Begum had left no stone unturned to please the Nawab and the Political Agent. She now asked for justice and for the punishment of the Nawab, and she pressed her claims and those of Sikandar to the State and begged that the tyrants might be ejected so that the people might live in peace and comfort. Receiving no reply to this, she despatched Mirza Amjad Beg and Moulvi Jamal-ud-din to Simla to wait on the Governor General, and the latter wrote the following account of the interview:

" I and Mirza Amjad Beg went to the Governor General's lodge at 4 p.m. The Guard of Honour was drawn up and saluted us. The Secretary came to receive us at the door and gave the letter which had come two days before to Mirza Amjad Beg to present to the Governor General who was sitting on a gold chair. There was a

circular foot carpet of brocade beneath and four servants were waving gold 'Morchals' (fans of peacock feathers) behind. There were rows of servants and mace bearers in front. On the left were four Aide-de-camps in military uniform sitting on chairs. As we approached the chairs the A.D.C's., saluted us and the Mirza and I presented sixty-one gold Mohurs each on behalf of the Nawab Begum Qudsia and eleven and five respectively on our own behalf. The Governor General accepted the Nazar by placing his hand on them and the servants picked up the coins. On his right hand was Mr. Maddock, and by his side were our chairs. Mr. Maddock translated.

"The Governor General asked after the welfare of Qudsia Begum, and referred to his old friendship with her and said that he desired that friendship would continue. The Mirza said that the Begum looked to the Governor General for help and had sent them to pay respects to him. Formal and ceremonial talk went on and the Governor General said that he would permit them to depart after a few days in which he would see the letter and reply to it. He expressed pleasure at the visit. Orders were then given for the trays with the robes of honour to be brought. First a robe of seven garments was

given to Mirza Amjad Beg and an ornamental turban was placed on his head. He saluted the Governor General and with the garments in his hand expressed his thanks. Afterwards another tray was brought, a turban was placed on my head and two garments were given me. I also saluted and expressed my gratitude for them."

Although both of Qudsia Begum's representatives were introduced to the Governor General and had an opportunity of pressing the Begum's claims, one of them viz Mirza Amjad Beg, although under great obligations to her, was faithless, and took no advantage of the good opportunity of laying her grievances before Lord Auckland. These men were sent not only to present the Begum's letter which could quite well have gone by post, but to plead her cause. Moulvi Jamal-ud-din being under the orders of the Mirza could say nothing, and the Mirza wasted all the time in formal and ceremonial talk. After the interview the Deputies returned to their lodging with the usual ceremonies. Two or three days later they waited on the Foreign Secretary at his house and discussed the matter with him. Moulvi Jamal-ud-din on this occasion spoke very freely and removed any doubts which the Secretary may have had, but it was decided that the affair should be settled

when Mr. Wilkinson visited Agra, and they were told to attend at that place. Qudsia Begum's object in sending this letter to Lord Auckland was that it was rumoured that the Nawab was always giving out that the misunderstanding between himself and Sikandar were caused by Qudsia Begum, and he wished to prove that she had lost her reason and fix a pension in cash on her instead of allowing her to hold a Jagir. The Governor General replied to Qudsia Begum's letter and a translation of his "Kharita" (polite letter in Persian) is as follows :

Letter from Lord George Auckland, Governor General of India dated the 17th October, 1839.

"I received your letter through your deputies Mirza Amjad Beg and Munshi Jamaluddin Khan. I was informed of every thing written in the letter and also verbally by your deputies in my presence. I am very sorry to know that the quarrel between yourself, your daughter and the Nawab of Bhopal is still going on ; and you, instead of relying and trusting upon the friendship of Mr. Wilkinson whose sympathy and regard for your family has been proved by experience, and particularly by his untiring zeal and energy for the welfare and prosperity of the Bhopal State, are suspicious of his actions

and think that he is partial to the Nawab. I therefore inform you for your satisfaction and in order to convince you, that the Political Agent has always written to me all the stories about the distressing incidents between yourself and the Nawab correctly; and a detailed account of every matter has reached me from him.

On examining the papers presented by your deputies. I, as a friend, think it advisable to write my conclusions on the subject to the Political Agent. Accordingly he will describe fully my views to you. As the correspondence on these important problems should all be carried on through the Political Agent in Bhopal, who is our representative there, his intervention is necessary. I believe that he has proved his sincerity, in the meantime you should bear in mind that unless he is interviewed that matter can in no wise be settled. I have accordingly directed your representatives to leave my presence and to carry on all correspondence in future through the Political Agent.

Hoping always to be regarded as your friend and well wisher and to receive your confidence and news of your welfare.

There is nothing further to write."

Mr. Wilkinson returned to Bhopal on November 6th, 1839, and communicated the contents of the Governor General's letter to the Begum. He also told her that the Governor General was of opinion that to raise a rebellion in the State was a serious matter, that she should remember that the Nawab had raised dissensions and made claims before he had reached manhood, but that he had not been listened to and that the Begum had received the support of the Governor General.

When the Nawab had attained his majority he had received his rights. Further that when he had struck Sikandar it was because she did not observe Purdah, and although Europeans considered such behaviour as oppressive and wrong, Mohammadans held a contrary view of such action. To this Qudsia Begum replied that Sikandar had given up Purdah before her marriage, if the Nawab objected to this why did he marry her? She said that she had carried out her daughter's marriage because she believed that it was the order of the Governor General that it should take place, and she never expected that Sikandar would be ill-treated by the Nawab. After this a discussion took place between Qudsia Begum and Mr. Wilkinson on the details of the quarrel and the disability or the reverse of a female

ruler, and about the rules and customs of Mahommadan marriages.

Correspondence continued and Qudsia Begum next asked that the State might be divided into two parts, the Nawab taking Raisen as his head quarters while she and Sikandar had Bhopal. She urged that Bhopal was her birthplace and that she had embellished it with palaces, gardens and a fine mosque, not yet finished, and that she had expended large sums on the religious and secular education of the people, further that her husband had been a faithful ally of the British Government and that to remove her from Bhopal would be a great hardship.

This request was tendered to Mr. Maddock, Secretary to the Governor General at Gwalior, and emissaries from the Nawab also waited on him at the same time. Mr. Maddock, however, told the messenger, Kazi Ahmad Ali, that the Begum's request could not be entertained and that the previous arrangement could not be altered. This was unexpected as Mr. Maddock had always supported the claims of Qudsia Begum.

No doubt the decision was right, as had the Begum's request been granted the State would have been split up into two small States and the efforts of Nawab Jahangir Mahommed Khan

Shah Jahan Begum

[*Face page* 124

to procure the accession of Mian *Dastgir Khan to the throne might have been successful.

The writer after consideration is of opinion that Qudsia Begum only put forward the proposal as a council of despair and finding herself helpless to effect anything else. She overlooked the fact that possibly the Nawab might take another wife and that the succession might go to a son by her. In any case the Begums would have been grieved to see the State severed in two, and the British Government would have equally regretted it during the troublous times of the mutiny.

Matters of less importance happened after this. The Begum remained at Islamnagar and her followers were forbidden to visit Bhopal, the prohibition was so strict that they could not even visit the †Eedgah, which had been built by her, on the day of the Eed.

After this there was tranquility of a sort and the birth of a daughter to Sikandar in 1838 turned the thoughts of all parties in another direction. This daughter became Nawab Shahjahan Begum and was the mother of the author.

Mr. Wilkinson had been succeeded by Mr. Henry Trevelyan as Political Agent, and the ill-

*An illegitimate son of Jahangir.

†The place of worship used on the day of the Eed.

feelings between Sikandar Begum and her husband had softened, and although the former lived at Islamnagar and the Nawab at Bhopal they used to meet sometimes in their walks abroad. The Nawab, however, was never reconciled to Qudsia Begum, and died in 1844, after having reigned only six years. After his death Asad Ali Khan, his minister, was turned out by the Government of India, and Shahjahan was acknowledged as Begum and ruler of Bhopal, with Foujdar Mahommed Khan her great uncle as Regent. Qudsia Begum was at last happy. She and Sikandar moved into Bhopal a month after the death of the Nawab and they lived together in great happiness. Qudsia Begum attempted again to secure the recognition of Sikandar Begum as Ruler of Bhopal, and eventually after some years as Regent Sikandar was recognised by the Government.

Qudsia Begum had attained her desires 27 years after the death of her husband and she spent the remainder of her long life in acts of charity for the public good. Sikandar Begum was a devoted daughter and always treated her mother with the greatest respect and love.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

The Begum's Jagir and its administration. Ceremonial visits and the Begum's Darbars.

The Begum's Jagir consisted of a large number of villages and much land situated in several parts of the State. The customs of the grants of jagirs vary considerably in different States as well as in British India, but the general rule is that a Jagir means the grant to some person of the revenues of a certain village or a piece of land and those revenues had already been fixed by the State or British authorities. So long as the cultivators paid their land revenue and whatever other taxes there might be to the holder of the Jagir the latter had no authority over them. In the case of Qudsia Begum, however, the Jagir meant very much more, and was nothing less than a small State or large private property over which she had full control. The whole amounted to many square miles with a revenue of Rs: 7,00,000 per annum. The Jagir was divided into seven subdivisions with fifteen

Police posts. There was a forest department, Public works office, Judicial courts, Head office, Treasury, Stables and a department for charitable objects as well as various other offices, and the Begum supported a small force of horse and foot soldiers and a regiment of Arabs. All these Departments were under the control of an Agent, called Kamdar, assisted by a committee of advisers. Qudsia Begum heard all the reports and petitions and issued orders on all of them and she was ready to listen to the personal grievances of any of her subjects or servants.

All letters addressed to the Agency or to British Officers were signed by the Begum, and she kept an Agent at Sehore for communicating with the Political Agent on unimportant matters. All letters or orders except the above were not signed by the Begum but bore the words : " From the presence of the Begum," and were taken as having been signed by her. The Begum also had two trusty officials always with her who carried out her verbal instructions.

Grain was distributed daily to indigent persons in the garden containing the tomb of her late husband.

None of the lands held by the Begum had been surveyed, and it was not till Sikandar Begum caused a general revenue settlement to be made

throughout the State that Qudsia Begum followed suit. Before then the system of revenue farmers was in force, i.e. a man contracted to pay a certain yearly revenue for a village or group of villages and made his own arrangements with the tenants. The Begum granted remissions of revenue when hailstorms, famines or other calamities occurred, and it was her custom to send robes of honour to the revenue farmers and Bankers and Merchants on the occasion of marriages. Many of the revenue farmers became very wealthy and even owned elephants. The cultivators appear generally to have been happy and prosperous and the Begum from time to time used to tour about her estates and hear their grievances. The account given of her yearly receipts and expenditure by her Agent is as follows :—

Income	Rs : 7,14,281 8 3	= about	£71,428	at that	time.
Expenditure	Rs : 5,71,573 3 0	= ,,	£57,157	,,	,,

The following were the items of expenditure :—

Alms	Rs :	25,183	15	0
Religious bequests	,,	33,016	12	0
Expenses of the Ramzam Sharif Ceremonies	,,	7,528	5	0
Waterworks	,,	29,444	14	3
Repairs of houses, bridges, roads and other public works	,,	48,031	3	6
Servants of the mosques	,,	10,685	11	3
Donations to pilgrims	,,	17,591	8	0
Pocket expenses	,,	9,176	15	9

Annual contribution for purchase of railway stock	,,	1,07,925	0	0
Servants	,,	1,36,409	3	0
The expenses of Palace and kitchen	,,	16,013	4	9

These expenses include the pay of her private servants which was only Rs: 22-8-0. This shows that she had only five or six such servants.

It was not surprising that with an "Imperium in Imperio" like this, friction should arise between the officials of the Jagir and those of the Bhopal State, and attempts were made both in the time of Sikandar and her daughter Shahjahan Begum to deprive Qudsia Begum of such extensive powers. In the former's reign it was decided that certain henious offences occurring in the Qudsia Begum's Jagir should be tried in the State Courts, and the services of a trusted official, named Munshi Fakr-ud-din, were lent at her request by the British Government to assist her in the management of her property. No further curtailment of her powers took place in Shahjahan's reign in spite of considerable trouble, as neither the Political Agent, nor the Governor General who was applied to, would agree to anything calculated to hurt or annoy Qudsia Begum.

Before Qudsia Begum abandoned the Purdah when receiving British Officers she used to sit behind a curtain of broad cloth. The officers'

arrival was notified by her female attendants, and their salams and enquiries after her health and welfare were conveyed to her through Hakim Shahzad Maseh and Mian Karam Mahommed Khan who also brought her replies. All important matters were settled through these two men, less important ones being dealt with by the Vakil. If the Political Agent held a consultation with the State officials, the Minister replied for the Begum who received reports of what the British Officers said and the reply made to him.

The Begum often held Darbars or receptions in Purdah, and as the officials or others came up to the curtain their names were announced by personal attendants and their salutes and compliments listened to. The Darbar then ended and pan and betul nut were distributed.

The strict rules of Purdah which were observed by Mahommedan ladies of that time were in accordance with the custom then prevalent, and purdah is still observed in India and has certain advantages owing to the condition of the country. It is, however, not prescribed either by God or the Prophet, and religious doctrine does not enjoin such rigid adherence to the rules which have now become the custom. For instance it is nowhere laid down that women must not

speak so that their voices are heard by strange men, and there are many other austerities which have no foundation in religion.

This is not a suitable place to discuss this question, but the author hopes to write a book in which the whole question of the origin of Purdah, its reasons, the severity brought into it from time to time, and Purdah as it was enjoined by Islam will be fully discussed.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

QUDSIA BEGUM'S MOSQUE—HER CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS. THE RAILWAY TO BHOPAL.

QUDSIA BEGUM, coming from a race of Afghan soldiers, simple men who cared much more for a trusty sword and a stout hearted horse than luxurious palaces, lived very simply and did very little towards improving the city of Bhopal or erecting fine buildings. She, however, built one very fine mosque in the heart of the City, and its beautiful Minarets of pearl grey stone, which are of a design probably unique in India, are visible for many miles, and seen from the upper lake at sunset are a striking feature among the many picturesque palaces of Bhopal.

She also was responsible for the "Aish Bagh" (Garden of delight), a beautiful garden in the oriental style with a large pleasure house, a small mosque and some other buildings in it. This garden was given by the author to her eldest son and heir, Nawab Nasrulla Khan.

Qudsia's fine mosque took about twenty-five years to complete. It was founded on the site

of an old Hindoo temple called the Sabha Mandal, and round the basement are a number of shops whose rent form part of the endowment of the mosque. There is an inscription on the Northern gate which translated, runs as follows :—" The construction of the Jama Musjid was commenced in the beginning of the year 1248 A.H. (1832 A.D.) corresponding to 1240 by the Fasli calender, by the generous and virtuous Nawab Gauhar Begum Saheba, daughter of Nawab Ghous Mahommed Khan, wife of the late Nawab Naziruddaulah Nazar Mahommed Khan Bahadur. It was finished in the end of the year 1273 A.H. (1857 A.D.) corresponding to 1264 Fasli. Eminent architects have given it strength and beauty, and by the careful management of honest persons it cost five hundred and sixty five thousand rupees two annas and nine pies. This inscription is by the hand of Mahommed Abbas, Shirwani."

The old ruined Hindoo Temple, Sabha Mandal, which it succeeded had an interesting inscription on it which gave the following particulars :—

" Rani Salmali, wife of Raja Vidia Dat, built a great stone temple named Sabha Mandal near the fort. It was commenced in the *Sambat year, 1208 (1151 A.D.) and finished on Monday

*Hindoo calender.

the 3rd day of the month Katik Badi 1241 Sambat (1184 A.D.). The Rani and Raja appointed 500 Brahmins to carry on worship in the temple and to teach the four Vedas, six Shastras, eighteen Puranas and Prosody and other branches of learning in the Sanskrit tongue.

Bhopal had always depended for its water supply on wells, and as the site is mostly rocky the wells were few and far between and the supply scanty, people having to pay as much as four annas for a leather skinful.

Qudsia Begum, ever ready to benefit the people, conceived the idea of giving them a supply of pure drinking water from the upper lake, and spent between five or six lakhs of rupees in

Note.—The four Vedas were written by Hakim Beyas, and are called :

Sam Ved
Rig Ved
Artur Ved
Yajur Ved

The six Shastras are the six schools of philosophy, and are styled :

(1) Sankhya } Logic
(2) Nyaya }
(3) Yoga }
(4) Vaisheshika } Concentration
(5) Parva Mimansa }
(6) Uttara Mimansa or Vedanta Philosophy

To be quite accurate (1) and (4) come under the Vedangas (3) and (5) under the Shastras, and (2) under Smritis.

The 18 Puranas, Bhagvat Gita, Shiva Puran, and others are books held in great veneration by the Hindoos. Pingala is the author of Chhandas or Prosody.

erecting a pumping station and a system of pipes throughout the City. This was carried out by a Scotch Engineer named David Cook, and she placed a sum of three lakhs with the British Government to be a perpetual endowment for the upkeep of the water works. The system is working well up to the present day and the supply, of pure water has been responsible for stamping out the ravages of cholera which was common in former years.

Qudsia also intended to bring a water channel to her mosque, but gave up the idea owing to the number of houses which would have had to be demolished.

Sir Henry Daly, Agent to the Governor General for Central India, was much distressed at the terrible loss of life during the famine and cholera year of 1869. Although strenuous efforts were made it was found impossible to bring grain into the afflicted districts fast enough to save life, and he therefore urged on the Government of India the necessity of a Railway through Bhopal and Central India and was instrumental in getting the Indian Midland Railway constructed, which connected up the Great Indian Peninsula Railway at Khandwa with the Railways of Northern India at Agra. This Railway passed through the territories of the Maharaja Holkar

A Gateway, Bhopal.

of Indore, Bhopal State, and for a long distance through Gwalior territory. It was therefore, arranged that these three Chiefs should contribute towards the cost of the portion through their States. As Qudsia Begum knew that her subjects would benefit she contributed a sum of Rs: 1,500,000 from her private purse. This sum had to be paid in instalments over four years, and an agreement was made with the British Government that if any sum remained to be paid after her death it would be made good by the Bhopal State. Similarly as regards interest, it was agreed that Qudsia Begum should receive it during her life and after that it was to go to the Ruler of the State. Only one out of the four instalments had been paid when she died, and the other three were paid subsequently from the income of her Jagir.

It is hardly necessary to mention that this link between Bombay and the North of India has proved of the utmost value not only to Bhopal but to India generally.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

THE MUTINY. QUDSIA BEGUM'S TRAVELS.

DURING the mutiny of 1857-58, Qudsia Begum did all in her power to prevent trouble in Bhopal. Her daughter Sikandar was then Regent and Qudsia had no part in the government; but when signs of discontent arose among the Bhopal troops, and times were very critical, owing to their having demanded double pay and there was not sufficient money in the State Treasury to meet the demand, she came forward and paid them out of her own funds. She was all in favour of satisfying the demands of the army and letting any man go who wished to, keeping only those who were willing to serve. In this way she gave most valuable help to her daughter. She had full confidence in the sepoys who were residents of Bhopal and she recommended only mild measures, and she urged that Nawab Umrao Doola and Fattehjang Khan the leaders of the army should be fully satisfied and kept in a good temper. She also had full confidence in God and commended her daughter to his care.

Sikandar Begum on her part constantly con-

sulted her mother and took her advice when she was anxious over the receipt of sensational news. Qudsia had an armed guard at her palace and used to visit her daughter every day and spent the rest of her time in seeing her troops, listening to their complaints and in other business. In one of her letters she writes : " I am working eighteen hours daily." As regards her own force of sepoys which cost her Rs : 20,000 per mensem, she handed them all over to Sikandar Begum and she made adequate arrangements to put down rebellion or sedition in her own Estate. That her officers and servants were willing to help the British is proved by the fact that her Agent at Sehore, Saiyid Gohar Ali, proceeded from Sehore to Hoshangabad with Mr. William Ray, Resident of Indore. In a letter to Qudsia, Mr. Ray wrote : " I reached Hoshangabad Cantonment from Sehore on the 23rd of June current, your deputy Qazi Saiyid Gohar Ali came with me from Sehore and made excellent arrangements for supplies in your territory, and suffered much trouble in looking after my comfort during the journey. I am much pleased with him. I shall come shortly to see you and I shall be glad to receive news of your welfare. The Qazi has left this place for Bhopal and will reach you. Dated the 14th July, 1857."

"P.S.—Colonel Durand, Agent to the Governor General, has asked Qazi Saiyid Gohar Ali for an elephant for his conveyance. The Qazi has given his elephant. It will shortly be returned to Bhopal."

Although there is not much on record, the few letters which remain show that the Begum's services to the British cause during the mutiny were appreciated, and that the Government was grateful to her. In the dispute during the last days of her life between the State and herself regarding the proposal to limit her authority in her Jagir, Mr. Eden, Political Agent, while referring to a memorandum of the Government, wrote to Shah Jahan Begum in February, 1880:

"Nawab Qudsia Begum had been loyally attached to the Government of India during the days of trouble, and her generosity and kindness are well known and deserve respect. She is in the last stage of her life and it is of the utmost importance not to disturb her peace and comfort in any way. The Government of India does not approve of the diminution of her past authority and honour."

Similarly, Sir Lepel Griffin, Agent to the Governor General, in his letter of condolence on her death in 1881, wrote: "She was a friend of the Gritish Government and her intentions were good."

Qudsia Begum does not seem to have travelled outside the Bhopal State until 1862, when she visited Jubbulpur and Allahabad and was present at Lord Canning's famous Durbars held after the mutiny. At Jubbulpur Sikandar Begum received the grant of the Bairasia district together with a robe of honour from the Government. Qudsia Begum received also a robe of honour at the same time.

She also visited Benares, Lucknow, Faizabad, Agra and other Cities. Then in November, 1863, she started on a pilgrimage to Mecca. After travelling to Bombay by stage and railway she embarked on the Steamer Indore and reached Jeddah in January, 1864. She proceeded thence to Mecca by caravan and remained there for four months. While there she visited the Sharif and was received with great honour by him and later she visited the Turkish Pasha and was called on by everyone of importance. Her intention was to have gone on to Medina, but she was dissuaded from doing so owing to the danger of the route and her reputation for wealth. Shortly before, a rich man from Oudh had been captured by the Bedouin and was not released till he paid a lakh of rupees.

She therefore, postponed her visit and returning

via Jeddah to India, made a short stay at Poona, and arrived in Bhopal in October, 1864.

In 1871, she again attempted to visit Medina and wrote to the Political Agent, Colonel Willoughby Osborne, asking him to obtain a passport for her, and saying that she intended to tour about in her Estate to improve her health and gain strength for the journey. She, however, found that with advancing age she was incapable of standing the fatigue of the journey and gave up the idea.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

QUDSIA BEGUM'S HONOURS AND TITLE. DISAGREEMENT WITH HER GRAND-DAUGHTER SHAH JAHAN BEGUM OVER THE LATTER'S SECOND MARRIAGE.

EVEN after giving up the throne Qudsia Begum was always treated with the same ceremony by British Officers as accorded to Ruling Princes. She had a personal salute of fifteen guns and she corresponded direct with the Agency. Whenever the Political Agent or Agent to the Governor General visited Bhopal they went to see her as well as Sikandar Begum and Shah Jahan. She accompanied her daughter when she visited Lord Canning at Jubbulpur and he returned her visit. On these occasions Qudsia presented a Nazar (offering of gold coins) and a plume of pearls to His Excellency, and received in return a necklace of pearls, a silver tea service, one brocaded shawl, some Kashmir shawls and a dress of brocade.

At Lord Lytton's great Durbar at Delhi in 1876, when Queen Victoria was proclaimed

Empress of India, Qudsia Begum was granted the order of the Crown of India, and the grant was made known to her in an official letter which was brought to Bhopal by Colonel William Kincaid, Political Agent. He held a Durbar and made the following speech :—

"I have much pleasure and happiness in making over the distinguished title and insignia of the Crown of India to the Nawab Begum Qudsia Sahiba which the Honourable the Governor General has sent as a token of Her Imperial Majesty's regard for her loyalty and honour.

Throughout the Bhopal State she is remembered with love and reverence for many generous deeds of charity. Those deeds and alms to the poor and needy were done for the sake of God and not from a desire for fame, and I will abstain from describing all of them at this gathering as those present are fully aware of them.

My audience, do you not offer your prayers in the great mosque which was built at the expenditure of great sums by her ? Do you not know how many poor and needy persons are enabled to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina through grants of money made by the Begum, and thus fulfil a duty laid upon them by God which even many persons of moderate means are not able to perform ? You also know

QUDSIA BEGUM

[*Face page* 144

how Qudsia Begum has assisted the ruling Begum in many important matters which are more fully known to the officers and officials of the State.

Besides this, there is one more new thing, which although it may not have won her so much reputation before the public, nevertheless has been of great public benefit. I refer to the generous help given by her to Nawab Shah Jahan Begum in enabling her to fulfil her desire to construct a Railway to Bhopal. She gave a million of rupees for this, a great sum considering the income of her Estate. I call on you all to join me in praying to God for her long life so that she may herself see what progress and prosperity the Railway brings with it to Bhopal, and to the Almighty to save Her Majesty the Queen and Empress of India."

General Sir Henry Daly, Agent to the Governor General, wrote in August. 1880 : " The advanced age and generosity of the Nawab Qudsia Begum demand our respect and regard so that as far as possible she may be relieved of those persons who live upon and benefit by the disunion created by them."

Again in the following September he wrote : " It would be a pleasant thing for us if the causes of the discord in the Bhopal State could have been obliterated during the old age of Nawab

Qudsia Begum, and if the members of the ruling family of the Bhopal State which is so well known for its loyalty to the British Government could cherish love and union among themselves as is the case in the family of Her Majesty the Queen of England."

In this connection Lord Ripon's opinion of Qudsia Begum is of interest. His Excellency wrote as follows in a letter dated July, 1880, to Shah Jahan Begum:—"It should also be born in mind that nothing should come to pass which may trouble her in the last few years of her life, as she is loved and respected since long by everyone who has benefitted by her generosity. I firmly believe that such an enlightened ruler as yourself will not be affected by the words of selfish persons who have taken advantage of the old age and infirmity of your grandmother, the Nawab Qudsia Begum, to entertain evil designs against her."

Although up to the time of her death Qudsia Begum loved her grand-daughter Shah Jahan, the latter's second marriage with Siddiq Hasan Khan without her knowledge or approval was the cause of considerable friction between them. Qudsia in common with most people at that time was against the remarriage of widows, and although in a discussion with the Chief

Qazi she was reminded that the daughters of the Prophet married a second time, she replied that what was permitted to them was not right for more sinful mortals. Besides this she was of opinion that Shah Jahan if she wished to remarry should have married into her own family, and not have taken one who was her own dependant. Efforts were made by Shah Jahan to conciliate her grandmother and to persuade her to receive her husband, but without success, and the author has described all that happened in this unhappy affair in a book called "Tuzuk Sultani," and it is painful to refer to it. Eventually Qudsia and Shahjahan were reconciled through the offices of the Political Agent, but Qudsia lived only about a year after the differences had been settled.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

HER DEATH. HER CHARACTER. HER WILLS AND HABITS.

QUDSIA BEGUM died after a short illness on the 17th December, 1881, fifteen years after the death of her daughter Sikandar. She had suffered every kind of grief and enjoyed every pleasure, while devoting her life to the benefit of others and worshipping God. Her body was carried in sorrowful silence to her husband's garden where a grave had been prepared for a long time, and it had been her custom to fill the grave every year with corn and then distribute the corn with an equal weight of silver to the poor. A great concourse of people of every sect and religion assembled and joined in the funeral ceremonies and prayers. The shops and offices were closed for three days, and Shahjahan Begum distributed thousands of maunds (80 lbs = 1 maund) of corn to the poor as alms. The flag at the Agency at Sehore was also lowered to half mast and the shops of the Cantonment were also closed as a mark of respect.

Although eighty-one years of age when she died, Qudsia Begum was strong and active, and her intellect was unimpaired, but the death of her daughter to whom she was greatly devoted had preyed upon her mind and saddened the last years of her life.

On receiving the news, Sir Lepel Griffin, the Agent to the Governor General, wrote the following sympathetic letter to Shahjahan Begum:

" This morning I received your letter informing me of the death of Nawab Qudsia Begum. I am very grieved to hear the sad news. This distinguished lady will long be remembered for her kindness and generosity, and she was a loyal friend of the British Government. The prayers of the poor and needy who profited by her charity will secure for her an exalted place in Heaven. You should regard her good and virtuous life, now completed, as a blessing and happiness, and you should be pleased that the misunderstandings between you were cleared away before her death. The authority was divided and powers were misused owing to her old age, now this is all ended."

Colonel William Kincaid, Political Agent at Sehore also wrote most sympathically too.

Qudsia Begum was very fond of exercise and

constantly walked for hours either in her Palace gardens or elsewhere, sometimes even she would enter the houses of poor people in the city and enquire about their condition and stay chatting with them.

It was her custom only to eat two simple meals a day, though many rich dishes were cooked in her kitchen and afterwards sent either to the Mosques or to the poor. Some near relations or distinguished persons dined with her.

Her dress consisted of the narrow Mahommedan trousers, a long shirt to the knee, and a head dress after the Arabian fashion. At times the material was sumptuous and at others quite simple, and in the latter years of her life she wore garments of quite coarse material and a head dress of ochre-coloured long cloth. As far as the author remembers she seldom if ever wore ornaments except on the 9th of the month of Zilhij in honour of the day of the Haj pilgrimage, but she soon took them off as they were irksome to her. She had been fond of riding and always owned valuable and well bred horses as well as elephants and carriages. When touring she used an elephant or palanquin, and later in her life, a sort of sedan chair. She was very fond of giving parties and banquets both to European and Indian ladies, and on these occasions there was

singing and music both by professional singers and by the Begum herself.

On one occasion she had a well sunk in the Nazar Bagh (garden) and when the water appeared she was so pleased that she summoned the courtiers and a number of the poor and made them drink the water; afterwards they were regaled with sweetmeats. On another she gave a party at the Aish Bagh where the *Jamun fruit was ripe, and the author remembers when she was only five years old being given a Jamun fruit by Qudsia Begum, and not knowing what it was, got frightened. On this Qudsia Begum got angry and told her daughter Sikandar that children ought to be brought up to eat anything and not only bread and meat, as only God knew what they would get in the future. After this a party was held whenever any particular fruit got ripe and the author and her sister used to attend them.

So much has been said already about her liberality that it is scarcely necessary to refer to it again, but the following story is worth mentioning. When she gave over the reins of government to Jahangir Mahommed Khan she was obliged to reduce her establishment as her income of course was greatly reduced. Her servants, however, all came to her and insisted

*A kind of plum.

on remaining in her service on a third of the pay they had been getting. This she agreed to, but some years later they attempted to take advantage of her good nature by saying that she would be held responsible for the reduction of their salaries at the day of judgment. This so affected her that she had a calculation made of all they had lost and began paying the amounts due. When she had paid out about a lakh of rupees Sikandar Begum heard what was taking place and went and persuaded her that there was no call to pay anything more. After consulting the Qazi and Mufti, Qudsia desisted.

Qudsia was most regular at her devotions which she performed very earnestly. Besides the five prayers laid down in the Qoran she offered others and went so far as to rise at two in the morning and remained engaged in prayer and in reciting the Qoran till eight a.m. She also insisted on her servants offering prayers too. Her own sleeping apartment was well furnished, but there was a small room attached to it with nothing on the floor except stones and she often spent whole nights in prayer in this place.

The author remembers so many acts of generosity of Qudsia Begum that to mention them all would fill a large book; among others she bestowed jagirs from her own Estate to learned and godly

persons and on old and loyal servants. These grants amounted to Rs: 70,860 per annum, and were distributed almost equally between Mahommedans and Hindoos. She also gave handsome allowances to her daughter and grand-daughter and to her nephews. When the author's eldest son, Nasrulla Khan, was born, Qudsia gave a cash present to every official and to the whole of the State army.

Qudsia Begum loved the holy places in Arabia and the Arabs, and looked on anything spent on them as part of her religion. When proceeding to Mecca a story is told of one of her boxes of treasure becoming broken and of the rupees falling out. The Bedouin at once began picking them up, and when the Begum was told what was going on she allowed them to keep them. During the four months spent by her in Mecca her charities were endless; she had brought many valuable presents and robes from Bhopal to present to the nobles of the place, and her reputation for liberality became so widely known and the crowd of beggars was so great when she and Sikandar attempted to make the circuit of the Kaaba, that the latter had to appeal to the Sharif of Mecca and the Turkish Pasha for some Turks to accompany them, and so accomplished their object. She also contributed large sums

for the service of the holy Mosque, and built a caravanserai there and a house at Medina for the use of pilgrims.

According to her accounts, out of an income of seven lakhs per annum nearly two lakhs were spent on charitable or religious objects. Her reputation for wealth, however, sometimes got her into difficulties; when travelling on a camel to Mecca, some twenty Bedouin tried to lead her camel away from the rest, evidently with the purpose of robbing her; a slave however, whom she had freed, flung himself on the neck of the camel and shouted for help, with the result that her armed escort came up and drove off the Bedouin.

Qudsia Begum made two wills. The first was executed in 1286 A.H. when she was in great despair over the death of her daughter. The second was twelve years later and she died the following year.

The first will translated ran as follows:—

"The first letter asking about my welfare reached me in the morning by the hand of a camel rider who had travelled all night. I was indisposed in temper and could not reply on the instant. To-day I received three letters from you informing me of your and Sultan Jahan Bibi's welfare and enquiring after mine.

May God bless you and Sultan Jahan with properity, long life and dignity. What is there to be said about my welfare ? I am not in normal condition, my old age and infirmity are increasing. My strength is failing. Life seems far away and death is approaching. Hence I entrust you and your daughter to God and write the following few lines as a will. You should act upon them as you are virtuous.

(1) Obey God and his Prophet and do not deviate from their commands. This line comprises all the words of advice written below.
(2) You should help the people although God helps everyone.
(3) Always keep to the union with the reigning power, that is the English Government, and consider their wishes prior to your own.
(4) You should personally hear the complaints of those who are oppressed and you should do them justice. Abstain from oppressing the people.
(5) You should dismiss cruel officers under you as you will be held responsible for their tyranny.
(6) You should pay regard to your relatives

and to the citizens, as their prosperity adds to the splendour of the city and their lives and property will be at your service.

(7) Be moderate in everything.

(8) Take care of the needy and benefit God's creatures.

(9) May God keep you from undesirable deeds. Do not be troubled and resign yourself to the will of God, and be patient and thankful.

(10) You should settle all cases as far as possible according to religious law.

(11) Trust more to old servants than new ones.

(12) The allowances of Sultan Jahan Bibi and her husband, Miyan Yasin Mahommed Khan, Moiz Mahommed Khan and Yar Mahommed Khan, who are your relations and who are young and without experience of the world, should be continued to them.

(13) Think of the result before commencing anything.

(14) You should take counsel in all matters and never depend on your own judgment.

(15) All the servants whether literate or

illiterate are residents of Bhopal, and have been serving us from the time of our ancestors, and we have always honoured and favoured them. You should also keep them as they are and arrange their employment according to their abilities, and should not trouble them in any way. They are old servants and citizens and will serve you loyally and faithfully. The Jagirs of the Qazi and Mufti, Daleep Singh son of Aman Singh Patel of Reti, and other Jagirdars of my Jagir, and Jepal Jeet Ram, the old Mustajir (tenant) of Bari and Durjan Singh and others should be maintained as they are now.

(16) You must keep your expenses within your income and should never incur debt. You should always cut your coat according to your cloth.

(17) I much regret that the canal is not completed. You should apply the property which I have set apart for its construction and maintenance for those purposes. The canal was constructed for the sake of God. No one should be charged anything for using the water and no tax should be laid on it.

You are wise enough not to require any more writing.

According to a statement made by the Nawab Moiz Mahommed Khan during his lifetime it appears that we received Rs: 10,000 from him on the occasion of the battle of Ashta as a loan on a verbal promise to repay it. Out of this Rs: 4000 according to him was repaid through Diwan Sikandar Quli, and Rs: 6000 remained due. Of this I gave Rs: 3000 to Yasin Mahommed Khan when he was pressed for money. The balance should be paid up. Besides this some money due from me on the allowance of Amna Bibi, daughter of the deceased Nawab, has been partly paid to her during her lifetime, and a part was spent on her daughter Chandni Begum's marriage. The remainder should be paid.

Besides all this I will send a paper for your signature promising to continue my contributions to charity, distribution of food, dresses and funds to pilgrims and others. Please send me your sanction so that I may send the above two papers for your signature.

The second will was as follows, dated Zilhija 1286 A.H. Owing to old age I suffer much from weakness and infirmity. No one except God can live always. As long as I am alive I am the owner of my property in whole and in part. Afterwards, I making you the owner of my whole property without exception of anything write the following few lines as a will to be carried out in perpetuity.

(1) The expenses of my works of charity and alms, Sada Barat, the garden of the mausoleum, the Juma Masjid, etc., should be maintained as before.

(2) A table showing the names of my servants and those of the Mausoleum and Bakshigiri with their present salaries is attached herewith. After my death all these servants should receive the pensfons fixed by me according to their merits. They should receive your favour and mercy.

(3) I have deposited a sum of money with the British Government for the perpetual maintenance of the water supply system, on the understanding that no tax should be levied on any one using the water. The system should always be maintained from the income of this sum.

All three wills which I have executed with the full possession of my senses should be carried out. I have sent a copy of this will to the Political Agent."

These interesting wills were a fit conclusion to the life of a great and charitable woman of India.

THE END.

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